

# THE OLD INNS OF OLD ENGLAND



CHARLES G. HARPER

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THE OLD INNS  
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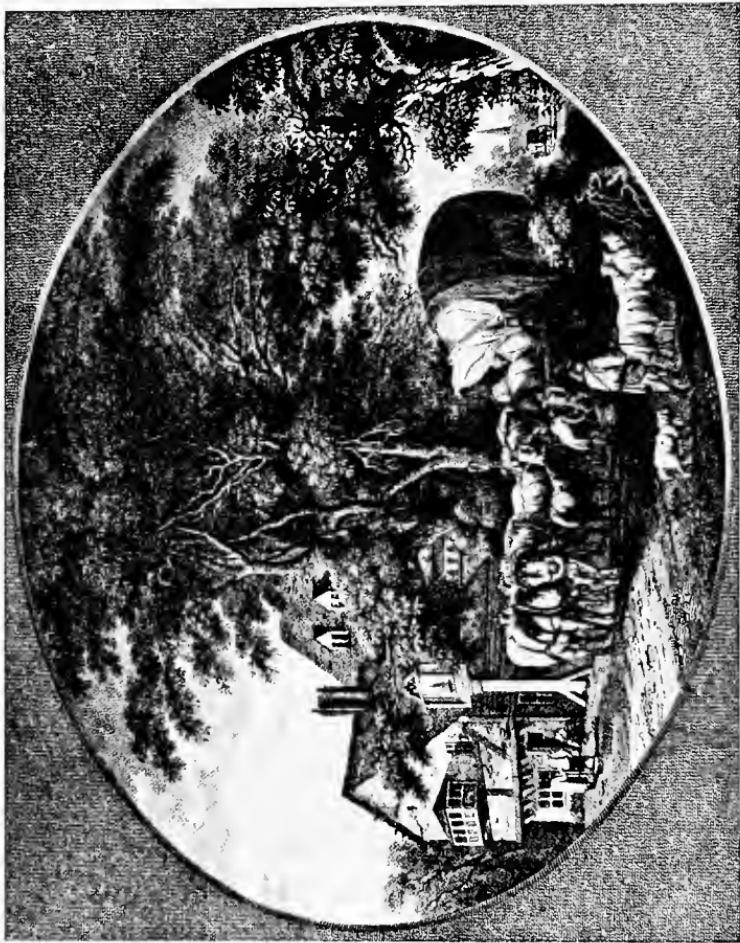
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THE ROADSIDE INN.

# THE OLD INNS OF OLD ENGLAND

*A PICTURESQUE ACCOUNT OF THE  
ANCIENT AND STORIED HOSTELRIES  
OF OUR OWN COUNTRY*

VOL. I

BY CHARLES G. HARPER



*Illustrated chiefly by the Author, and from Prints  
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*IT is somewhat singular that no book has hitherto been published dealing either largely or exclusively with Old Inns and their story. I suppose that is because there are so many difficulties in the way of one who would write an account of them. The chief of these is that of arrangement and classification; the next is that of selection; the last that of coming to a conclusion. I would ask those who read these pages, and have perhaps some favourite inn they do not find mentioned or illustrated here, to remember that the merely picturesque inns that have no story, or anything beyond their own picturesqueness to render them remarkable, are—let us be thankful for it!—still with us in great numbers, and that to have illustrated or mentioned even a tithe of them would have been impossible. I can think of no literary and artistic work more delightful than*

*the quest of queer old rustic inns, but two stout volumes will probably be found to contain as much on the subject as most people wish to know—and it is always open to anyone who does not find his own especial favourite here to condemn the author for his ignorance, or, worse, for his perverted taste.*

*As for methods, those are of the simplest. You start by knowing, ten years beforehand, what you intend to produce; and incidentally, in the course of a busy literary life, collect, note, sketch, and make extracts from Heaven only knows how many musty literary dustbins and sloughs of despond. Then, having reached the psychological moment when you must come to grips with the work, you sort that accumulation, and, mapping out England into tours, with inns strung like beads upon your itinerary, bring the book, after some five thousand miles of travel, at last into being.*

*It should be added that very many inns are incidentally illustrated or referred to in the series of books on great roads by the present writer; but as those works dealing with Roads, another treating of the History of Coaching, and the present volumes are all part of one comprehensive plan dealing with the History of Travel in general, the allusions to inns in the various road-books have but rarely been repeated; while it will be found that if, in order*

*to secure a representative number of inns, it has been, in some cases, found unavoidable to retrace old footsteps, new illustrations and new matter have, as a rule, been brought to bear.*

*The Old Inns of London have not been touched upon very largely, for most of them are, unhappily, gone. Only the few existing ones have been treated, and then merely in association with others in the country. To write an account of the Old Inns of London would now be to discourse, in the manner of an antiquary, on things that have ceased to be.*

CHARLES G. HARPER.

PETERSHAM,

SURREY.

*September, 1906.*



## C O N T E N T S

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTORY . . . . .	1
II. THE ANCIENT HISTORY OF INNS . . . . .	13
III. GENERAL HISTORY OF INNS . . . . .	28
IV. THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY . . . . .	42
V. LATTER DAYS . . . . .	57
VI. PILGRIMS' INNS AND MONASTIC HOSTELS . . . . .	76
VII. PILGRIMS' INNS AND MONASTIC HOSTELS ( <i>continued</i> ) . . . . .	117
VIII. HISTORIC INNS . . . . .	144
IX. INNS OF OLD ROMANCE . . . . .	188
X. PICKWICKIAN INNS . . . . .	210
XI. DICKENSIAN INNS . . . . .	265
XII. HIGHWAYMEN'S INNS . . . . .	303



LIST OF  
ILLUSTRATIONS



SEPARATE PLATES

THE ROADSIDE INN . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	FACING PAGE
THE LAST OF THE OLD GALLERIED INNS OF LONDON: THE “GEORGE,” SOUTHWARK. ( <i>Photo by T. W. Tyrrell</i> ) . . . . .	32 ✓
THE KITCHEN OF A COUNTRY INN, 1797: SHOWING THE TURNSPIT DOG. ( <i>From the engraving after Rowlandson</i> ) . . . . .	48 ✓
WESTGATE, CANTERBURY, AND THE “FALSTAFF” INN. . . . .	86 ✓
CHARING CROSS, ABOUT 1829, SHOWING THE “GOLDEN CROSS” INN. ( <i>From the engraving after T. Hosmer Shepherd</i> ) . . . . .	218 ✓
THE “GOLDEN CROSS,” SUCCESSOR OF THE PICKWICKIAN INN, AS REBUILT 1828 . . . . .	220 ✓
ROCHESTER IN PICKWICKIAN DAYS, SHOWING THE OLD BRIDGE AND “WRIGHT’S” . . . . .	224 ✓
THE “BELLE SAUVAGE.” ( <i>From a drawing by T. Hosmer Shepherd</i> ) . . . . .	228 ✓
THE DICKENS ROOM, “LEATHER BOTTLE,” COBHAM . . . . .	230 ✓
THE “BULL INN,” WHITECHAPEL. ( <i>From the water-colour drawing by P. Palfrey</i> ) . . . . .	246 ✓

	FACING PAGE
THE "WHITE HART," BATH . . . . .	252 ✓
THE "BUSH," BRISTOL . . . . .	256 ✓
THE "COACH AND HORSES," ISLEWORTH . . . . .	276 ✓
THE "LION," SHREWSBURY, SHOWING THE ANNEXE ADJOINING, WHERE DICKENS STAYED . . . . .	298 ✓
THE "GREEN MAN," HATTON . . . . .	318 ✓
THE HIGHWAYMAN'S HIDING-HOLE . . . . .	318

## ILLUSTRATIONS IN TEXT

Vignette, The Old-time Innkeeper . . . . .	<i>Title-page</i>
Preface . . . . .	PAGE v
List of Illustrations . . . . .	xi
The Old Inns of Old England, The "Black Bear," Sandbach	I
The Oldest Inhabited House in England: The "Fighting Cocks," St Albans . . . . .	5
The "Dick Whittington," Cloth Fair . . . . .	6
"Ye Olde Rover's Return," Manchester . . . . .	7
The Oldest Licensed House in Great Britain: The "Seven Stars," Manchester . . . . .	11
An Ale-stake. ( <i>From the Louterell Psalter</i> ) . . . . .	15
Elynor Rummynge . . . . .	21
The "Running Horse," Leatherhead . . . . .	25
Façsimile of an Account rendered to John Palmer in 1787 .	54
The Last Days of the "Swan with Two Necks" . . . . .	55
Crypt at the "George," Rochester . . . . .	83
Sign of the "Falstaff," Canterbury . . . . .	88
House formerly a Pilgrims' Hostel, Compton . . . . .	91
The "Star," Alfriston . . . . .	93
Carving at the "Star," Alfriston . . . . .	95

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

xiii

	PAGE
The "Green Dragon," Wymondham . . . . .	96
The Pilgrims' Hostel, Battle . . . . .	97
The "New Inn," Gloucester . . . . .	99
Courtyard, "New Inn," Gloucester . . . . .	103
The "George," Glastonbury . . . . .	109
High Street, Glastonbury, in the Eighteenth Century <i>(From the etching by Rowlandson)</i> . . . . .	115
The "George," St. Albans . . . . .	119
The "Angel," Grantham . . . . .	121
The "George," Norton St. Philip . . . . .	125
Yard of the "George," Norton St. Philip . . . . .	131
Yard of the "George," Winchcombe . . . . .	135
The "Lord Crewe Arms," Blanchland . . . . .	139
The "Old King's Head," Aylesbury . . . . .	141
The "Reindeer," Banbury . . . . .	145
Yard of the "Reindeer," Banbury . . . . .	149
The Globe Room, "Reindeer" Inn, Banbury . . . . .	153
The "Music House," Norwich . . . . .	157
The "Dolphin," Potter Heigham . . . . .	159
The "Nag's Head," Thame . . . . .	161
Yard of the "Greyhound," Thame . . . . .	163
The "Crown and Treaty," Uxbridge . . . . .	165
The "Treaty Room," "Crown and Treaty," Uxbridge . . . . .	167
The "Three Crowns," Chagford . . . . .	169
The "Red Lion," Hillingdon . . . . .	170
Yard of the "Saracen's Head," Southwell . . . . .	173
King Charles' Bedroom, "Saracen's Head," Southwell . . . . .	177
The "Cock and Pymat" . . . . .	181
Porch of the "Red Lion," High Wycombe . . . . .	184
The "White Hart," Somerton . . . . .	186
The "Ostrich," Colnbrook . . . . .	191
Yard of the "Ostrich," Colnbrook . . . . .	199

	PAGE
“Piff’s Elm” . . . . .	203
The “Golden Cross,” in Pickwickian Days . . . . .	215
The “Bull,” Rochester . . . . .	223
The “Swan,” Town Malling: Identified with the “Blue Lion,” Muggleton . . . . .	226
Sign of the “Bull and Mouth” . . . . .	227
The “Leather Bottle,” Cobham . . . . .	229
The “Waggon and Horses,” Beckhampton . . . . .	233
“Shepherd’s Shore” . . . . .	235
“Beckhampton Inn” . . . . .	239
The “Angel,” Bury St. Edmunds . . . . .	241
The “George the Fourth Tavern,” Clare Market . . . . .	243
Doorway of the “Great White Horse,” Ipswich . . . . .	247
The “Great White Horse,” Ipswich . . . . .	250
Sign of the “White Hart,” Bath . . . . .	255
“The Bell,” Berkeley Heath . . . . .	257
The “Hop-pole,” Tewkesbury . . . . .	259
The “Pomfret Arms,” Towcester: formerly the “Saracen’s Head” . . . . .	260
The Yard of the “Pomfret Arms” . . . . .	261
“Osborne’s Hotel, Adelphi” . . . . .	263
The “White Horse,” Eaton Socon . . . . .	267
The “George,” Greta Bridge . . . . .	269
The “Coach and Horses,” near Petersfield . . . . .	271
“Bottom” Inn . . . . .	273
The “King’s Head,” Chigwell, the “Maypole” of <i>Barnaby Rudge</i> . . . . .	279
The “Green Dragon,” Alderbury . . . . .	283
The “George,” Amesbury . . . . .	285
Interior of the “Green Dragon,” Alderbury . . . . .	287
Sign of the “Black Bull,” Holborn . . . . .	289
The “Crispin and Crispianus,” Strood . . . . .	293

*LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS*

x

	PAG
The "Ship and Lobster" . . . . .	29
"Jack Straw's Castle" . . . . .	30
The "Three Houses Inn," Sandal . . . . .	30 <sup>1</sup>
The "Crown" Inn, Hempstead . . . . .	30 <sup>1</sup>
"Turpin's Cave," near Chingford . . . . .	31
The "Green Dragon," Welton . . . . .	31 <sup>1</sup>
The "Three Magpies," Sipson Green . . . . .	31 <sup>1</sup>
The "Old Magpies" . . . . .	31 <sup>1</sup>
The "Green Man," Putney . . . . .	32
The "Spaniards," Hampstead Heath . . . . .	32 <sup>1</sup>





# The Old Inns of Old England

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

THE Old Inns of Old England!—how alluring and how inexhaustible a theme! When you set out to reckon up the number of those old inns that demand a mention, how vast a subject it is! For although the Vandal—identified here with the brewer and the ground-landlord—has been busy in London and the great centres of population, destroying many of those famous old hostellries our grandfathers knew and appreciated, and building in their stead “hotels” of the most grandiose and palatial kind, there are happily still remaining to us a large number of the genuine old cosy haunts where the traveller, stained with the marks of travel, may enter and take his

ease without being ashamed of his travel-stains or put out of countenance by the modish visitors of this complicated age, who dress usually as if going to a ball, and whose patronage has rung the death-knell of many an inn once quaint and curious, but now merely “replete with every modern convenience.”

I thank Heaven—and it is no small matter, for surely one may be thankful for a good inn—that there yet remain many old inns in this Old England of ours, and that it is not yet quite (although nearly) a misdemeanour for the wayfarer to drink a tankard of ale and eat a modest lunch of bread and cheese in a stone-flagged, sanded rustic parlour; or even, having come at the close of day to his halting-place, to indulge in the mild dissipation and local gossip in the bar of an old-time hostelry.

This is one of the last surviving joys of travel in these strange times when you journey from great towns for sake of change and find at every resort that the town has come down before you, in the shape of an hotel more or less palatial, wherein you are expected to dine largely off polished marble surroundings and Turkey carpets, and where every trace of local colour is effaced. A barrier is raised there between yourself and the place. You are in it, but not of it or among it; but something alien, like the German or Swiss waiters themselves, the manager, and the very directors and shareholders of the big concern.

At the old-fashioned inn, on the other hand,

the whole establishment is eloquent of the place, and while you certainly get less show and glitter, you do, at any rate, find real comfort, and early realise that you have found that change for which you have come.

But, as far as mere name goes, most inns are “hotels” nowadays. It is as though innkeepers were labouring under the illusion that “inn” connotes something inferior, and “hotel” a superior order of things. Even along the roads, in rustic situations, the mere word “inn”—an ancient and entirely honourable title—is become little used or understood, and, generally speaking, if you ask a rustic for the next “inn” he stares vacantly before his mind grasps the fact that you mean what he calls a “pub,” or, in some districts oftener still, a “house.” Just a “house.” Some employment for the speculative mind is offered by the fact that in rural England an inn is “a house” and the workhouse “*the House*.” Both bulk largely in the bucolic scheme of existence, and, as a temperance lecturer might point out, constant attendance at the one leads inevitably to the other. At all events, both are great institutions, and prominent among the landmarks of Old England.

Which is the oldest, and which the most picturesque, inn this England of ours can show? That is a double-barrelled question whose first part no man can answer, and the reply to whose second half depends so entirely upon individual likings and preferences that one naturally hesitates

before being drawn into the contention that would surely arise on any particular one being singled out for that supreme honour. Equally with the morning newspapers—and the evening—each claiming the “largest circulation,” and, like the several Banbury Cake shops, each the “original,” there are several “oldest licensed” inns, and very many arrogating the reputation of the “most picturesque.”

The “Fighting Cocks” inn at St. Albans, down by the river Ver, below the Abbey, claims to be—not the oldest inn—but the oldest inhabited house, in the kingdom: a pretension that does not appear to be based on anything more than sheer impudence; unless, indeed, we take the claim to be a joke, to which an inscription,

The Old Round House,  
Rebuilt after the Flood,

formerly gave the clue. But that has disappeared. The Flood, in this case, seeing that the building lies low, by the river Ver, does not necessarily mean the Deluge.

This curious little octagonal building is, however, of a very great age, for it was once, as “St. Germain’s Gate,” the water-gate of the monastery. The more ancient embattled upper part disappeared six hundred years ago, and the present brick-and-timber storey takes its place.

The City of London’s oldest licensed inn is, by its own claiming, the “Dick Whittington,” in Cloth Fair, Smithfield, but it only claims to have

been licensed in the fifteenth century, when it might reasonably—without much fear of contradiction—have made it a century earlier. This is an unusual modesty, fully deserving mention. It is only an “inn” by courtesy, for, however



THE OLDEST INHABITED HOUSE IN ENGLAND :  
THE “ FIGHTING COCKS,” ST. ALBANS.

interesting and picturesque the grimy, tottering old lath-and-plaster house may be to the stranger, imagination does not picture any one staying either in the house or in Cloth Fair itself while other houses and other neighbourhoods remain to choose from; and, indeed, the “Dick Whittington”

does not pretend to be anything else than a public-house. The quaint little figure at the angle, in the gloom of the overhanging upper storey, is one of the queer, unconventional imaginings of our remote forefathers, and will repay examination.



THE "DICK WHITTINGTON," CLOTH FAIR.

Our next claimant in the way of antiquity is the "Seven Stars" inn at Manchester, a place little dreamt of, in such a connection, by most people; for, although Manchester is an ancient city, it is so modernised in general appearance that it is a place wherein the connoisseur

of old-world inns would scarce think of looking for examples. Yet it contains three remarkably picturesque old taverns, and the neighbouring town of Salford, nearly as much a part of Manchester as Southwark is of London, possesses another. To take the merely picturesque, unstoried houses first :

these are the “Bull’s Head,” Greengate, Salford; the “Wellington” inn, in the Market-place,



“YE OLDE ROVER’S RETURN,” MANCHESTER.

Manchester; the tottering, crazy-looking tavern called “Ye Olde Rover’s Return,” on Shude Hill, claiming to be the “oldest beer-house in the city,”

and additionally said once to have been an old farmhouse “where the Cow was kept that supplied Milk to The Men who built the ‘Seven Stars,’” and lastly—but most important—the famous “Seven Stars” itself, in Withy Grove, proudly bearing on its front the statement that it has been licensed over 560 years, and is the oldest licensed house in Great Britain.

The “Seven Stars” is of the same peculiar old-world construction as the other houses just enumerated, and is just a humble survival of the ancient rural method of building in this district: with a stout framing of oaken timbers and a filling of rag-stone, brick, and plaster. Doubtless all Manchester, of the period to which these survivals belong, was of like architecture. It was a method of construction in essence identical with the building of modern steel-framed houses and offices in England and in America: modern construction being only on a larger scale. In either period, the framework of wood or of metal is set up first and then clothed with its architectural features, whether of stone, brick, or plaster.

The “Seven Stars,” however, is no skyscraper. So far from soaring, it is of only two floors, and, placed as it is—sandwiched as it is, one might say—between grim, towering blocks of warehouses, looks peculiarly insignificant.

We may suppose the existing house to have been built somewhere about 1500, although there is nothing in its rude walls and rough axe-hewn timbers to fix the period to a century more or less.

At any rate, it is not the original “Seven Stars” on this spot, known to have been first licensed in 1356, three years after inns and alehouses were inquired into and regulated, under Edward the Third; by virtue of which record, duly attested by the archives of the County Palatine of Lancaster, the present building claims to be the “oldest Licensed House in Great Britain.”

There is a great deal of very fine, unreliable “history” about the “Seven Stars,” and some others, but it is quite true that the inn is older than Manchester Cathedral, for that—originally the Collegiate Church—was not founded until 1422; and topers with consciences remaining to them may lay the flattering unction to their souls that, if they pour libations here, in the Temple of Bacchus, rather than praying in the Cathedral, they do, at any rate (if there be any virtue in that), frequent a place of greater antiquity.

And antiquity is cultivated with care and considerable success at the “Seven Stars,” as a business asset. The house issues a set of seven picture-postcards, showing its various “historic” nooks and corners, and the leaded window-casements have even been artfully painted, in an effort to make the small panes look smaller than they really are; while the unwary visitor in the low-ceilinged rooms falls over and trips up against all manner of unexpected steps up and steps down.

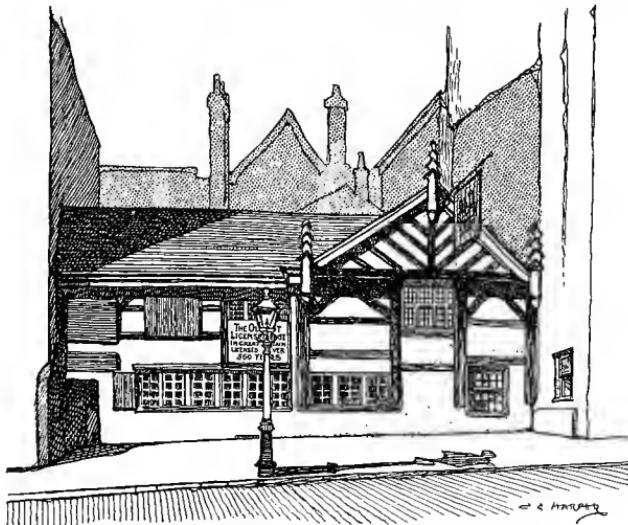
It is, of course, not to be supposed that a house with so long a past should be without its legends, and in the cellars the credulous and

uncritical stranger is shown an archway that, he is told, led to old Ordsall Hall and the Collegiate Church! What thirsty and secret souls they must have been in that old establishment! But the secret passage is blocked up now. Here we may profitably meditate awhile on those “secret passages” that have no secrets and afford no passage; and may at the same time stop to admire the open conduct of that clergyman who, despising such underhand and underground things, was accustomed in 1571, according to the records of the Court Leet, to step publicly across the way in his surplice, in sermon-time, for a refreshing drink.

“What stories this old Inn could recount if it had the power of language!” exclaims the leaflet sold at the “Seven Stars” itself. The reflection is sufficiently trite and obvious. What stories could not any building tell, if it were so gifted? But fortunately, although walls metaphorically have ears, they have not—even in literary imagery—got tongues, and so cannot blab. And well too, for if they could and did, what a cloud of witness there would be, to be sure. Not an one of us would get a hearing, and not a soul be safe.

But what stories, in more than one sense, Harrison Ainsworth told! He told a tale of Guy Fawkes, in which that hero of the mask, the dark-lantern and the powder-barrel escaped, and made his way to the “Seven Stars,” to be concealed in a room now called “Ye Guy Fawkes Chamber.” Ye gods!

We know perfectly well that he did not escape, and so was not concealed in a house to which he could not come, but—well, there! Such fantastic tales, adopted by the house, naturally bring suspicion upon all else; and the story of the horse-shoe upon one of its wooden posts is therefore, rightly or wrongly, suspect. This is a legend



THE OLDEST LICENSED HOUSE IN GREAT BRITAIN:  
THE "SEVEN STARS," MANCHESTER.

that tells how, in 1805, when we were at war with Napoleon, the Press Gang was billeted at the "Seven Stars," and seized a farmer's servant who was leading a horse with a cast shoe along Withy Grove. The Press Gang could not legally press a farm-servant, but that probably mattered little, and he was led away; but, before he went, he nailed the cast horse-shoe to a post, exclaiming, "Let this stay till I come from the wars to claim

it!" He never returned, and the horse-shoe remains in its place to this day.

The room adjoining the Bar parlour is called nowadays the "Vestry." It was, according to legends, the meeting-place of the Watch, in the old days before the era of police; and there they not only met, but stayed, the captain ever and again rising, with the words, "Now we will have another glass, and then go our rounds"; upon which, emptying their glasses, they all would walk round the tables and then re-seat themselves.

A great deal of old Jacobean and other furniture has been collected, to fill the rooms of the "Seven Stars," and in the "Vestry" is the "cupboard that has never been opened" within the memory of living man. It is evidently not suspected of holding untold gold. Relics from the New Bailey Prison, demolished in 1872, are housed here, including the doors of the condemned cell, and sundry leg-irons; and genuine Carolean and Cromwellian tables are shown. The poet who wrote of some marvellously omniscient personage—

And still the wonder grew  
That one small head could carry all he knew,

would have rejoiced to know the "Seven Stars," and might have been moved to write a similar couplet, on how much so small a house could be made to hold.

## CHAPTER II

### THE ANCIENT HISTORY OF INNS

INNS, hotels, public-houses of all kinds, have a very ancient lineage, but we need not in this place go very deeply into their family history, or stodge ourselves with fossilised facts at the outset. So far as we are concerned, inns begin with the Roman Conquest of Britain, for it is absurd to suppose that the Britons, whom Julius Cæsar conquered, drank beer or required hotel accommodation.

The colonising Romans themselves, of course, were used to inns, and when they covered Britain with a system of roads, hostelries and mere drinking-places of every kind sprang up beside them, for the accommodation and refreshment alike of soldiers and civilians. There is no reason to suppose that the Roman legionary was a less thirsty soul than the modern soldier, and therefore houses that resembled our beer-shops and rustic inns must have been sheer necessities. There was then the *bibulium*, where the bibulous boozed to their hearts' content; and there were the *diversoria* and *caupones*, the inns or hotels, together with the posting-houses along the roads, known as *mansiones* or *stabulia*.

The *bibulium*, that is to say, the ale-house or tavern, displayed its sign for all men to see: the ivy-garland, or wreath of vine-leaves, in honour of Bacchus, wreathed around a hoop at the end of a projecting pole. This bold advertisement of good drink to be had within long outlasted Roman times, and indeed still survives in differing forms, in the signs of existing inns. It became the “ale-stake” of Anglo-Saxon and middle English times.

The traveller recognised the ale-stake at a great distance, by reason of its long pole—the “stake” whence those old beer-houses derived their name—projecting from the house-front, with its mass of furze, or garland of flowers, or ivy-wreath, dangling at the end. But the ale-houses that sold good drink little needed such signs, a circumstance that early led to the old proverb, “Good wine needs no bush.”

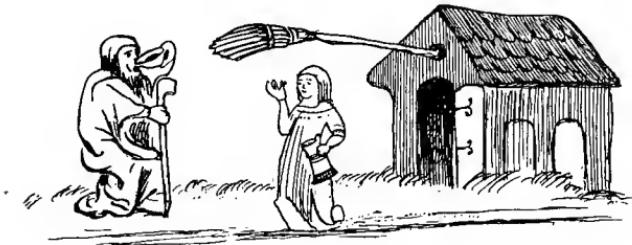
On the other hand, we may well suppose the places that sold only inferior swipes required poles very long and bushes very prominent, and in London, where competition was great, all ale-stakes early began to vie with one another which should in this manner first attract the attention of thirsty folk. This at length grew to be such a nuisance, and even a danger, that in 1375 a law was passed that all taverners in the City of London owning ale-stakes projecting or extending over the king’s highway “more than seven feet in length at the utmost,” should be fined forty pence and be compelled to remove the offending sign.

We find the “ale-stake” in Chaucer, whose

“Pardoner” could not be induced to commence his tale until he had quenched his thirst at one:

But first quod he, her at this ale-stake  
I will bothe drynke and byten on a cake.

We have, fortunately, in the British Museum, an illustration of such a house, done in the fourteenth century, and therefore contemporary with Chaucer himself. It is rough but vivid, and if the pilgrim we see drinking out of a saucer-like cup be gigantic, and the landlady, waiting



AN ALE-STAKE.

*From the Louterell Psalter.*

with the jug, a thought too big for her inn, we are at any rate clearly made to see the life of that long ago. In this instance the actual stake is finished off like a besom, rather than with a bush.

The connection, however, between the Roman garland to Bacchus and the mediæval “bush” is obvious. The pagan God of Wine was forgotten, but the advertisement of ale “sold on the premises” was continued in much the same form; for in many cases the “bush” was a wreath, renewed at intervals, and twined around a permanent hoop.

With the creation, in later centuries, of distinctive signs, we find the hoop itself curiously surviving as a framework for some device; and thus, even as early as the reign of Edward the Third, mention is found of a “George-in-the-hoop,” probably a picture or carved representation of St. George, the cognisance of England, engaged in slaying the dragon. There were inns in the time of Henry the Sixth by the name of the “Cock-in-the-Hoop”; and doubtless the representation of haughty cockerels in that situation led by degrees to persons of self-sufficient manner being called “Cock-a-hoop,” an old-fashioned phrase that lingered on until some few years since.

In some cases, when the garland was no longer renewed, and no distinctive sign filled the hoop, the “Hoop” itself became the sign of the house: a sign still frequently to be met with, notably at Cambridge, where a house of that name, in coaching days a celebrated hostelry, still survives.

The kind of company found in the ale-stakes—that is to say, the beer-houses and taverns—of the fourteenth century is vividly portrayed by Langland, in his *Vision of Piers Plowman*. In that long Middle English poem, the work of a moralist and seer who was at the same time, beneath his tonsure and in spite of his orders, something of a man of the world, we find the virtuous ploughman reviewing the condition of society in that era, and (when you have once become used to the ancient spelling) doing so in a manner that is not only

readable to moderns, but even entertaining ; while, of course, as evidence of social conditions close upon six hundred years ago, the poem is invaluable.

We learn how Beton the brewster met the glutton on his way to church, and bidding him “good-morrow,” asked him whither he went.

“To holy church,” quoth he, “for to hear mass. I will be shiven, and sin no more.”

“I have good ale, gossip,” says the ale-wife, “will you assay it ?” And so glutton, instead of going to church, takes himself to the ale-house, and many after him. A miscellaneous company that was. There, with Cicely the woman-shoemaker, were all manner of humble, and some disreputable, persons, among whom we are surprised to find a hermit. What should a hermit be doing in an ale-house ? But, according to Langland’s own showing elsewhere, the country was infested with hermits who, refusing restriction to their damp and lonely hermitages, frequented the alehouses, and only went home, generally intoxicated, to their mouldy pallets after they had drunk and eaten their fill and roasted themselves before the fire.

Here, then :

Cesse the souteresse<sup>1</sup> sat on the bench,  
Watte the warner<sup>2</sup> and hys wyf bothe  
Thomme the tynkere, and tweye of hus knaues,  
Hicke the hakeneyman, and Houwe the neldere,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Woman-shoemaker.

<sup>2</sup> Warrener.

<sup>3</sup> Needler : maker of needles.

Claryce of Cockeslane, the clerk of the churche,  
 An haywarde and an heremyte, the hangeman of Tyborne,  
 Dauwe the dykere,<sup>1</sup> with a dozen harlotes,  
 Of portours and of pyke-porses, and pylede<sup>2</sup> toth-drawers.  
 A ribibour,<sup>3</sup> a ratonere,<sup>4</sup> a rakyer of chepe,  
 A roper, a redynkyng,<sup>5</sup> and Rose the dissheres,  
 Godfrey of garlekehythe, and gryfin the walshe,<sup>6</sup>  
 An vpholderes an hepe.

All day long they sat there, boozing, chaffering,  
 and quarrelling :

There was laughing and louring, and “let go the cuppe,”  
 And seten so till euensonge and songen vmwhile,  
 Tyl glotoun had y-globbed a galoun and a Iille.

By that time he could neither walk nor stand. He took his staff and began to go like a gleeman’s bitch, sometimes sideways and sometimes backwards. When he had come to the door, he stumbled and fell. Clement the cobbler caught him by the middle and set him on his knees, and then, “with all the woe of the world” his wife and his wench came to carry him home to bed. There he slept all Saturday and Sunday, and when at last he woke, he woke with a thirst—how modern *that* is, at any rate! The first words he uttered were, “Where is the bowl?”

A hundred and fifty years later than *Piers Plowman* we get another picture of an English ale-house, by no less celebrated a poet. This famous house, the “Running Horse,” still stands at Leatherhead, in Surrey, beside the long, many-arched bridge that there crosses the river Mole at

<sup>1</sup> Ditcher.

<sup>2</sup> Bald.

<sup>3</sup> Fiddler.

<sup>4</sup> Ratter.

<sup>5</sup> A mounted servant of a knight.

<sup>6</sup> Welshman.

one of its most picturesque reaches. It was kept in the time of Henry the Seventh by that very objectionable landlady, Elynor Rummyngh, whose peculiarities are the subject of a laureate's verse. Elynor Rummyngh, and John Skelton, the poet-laureate who hymned her person, her beer, and her customers, both flourished in the beginning of the sixteenth century. Skelton, whose genius was wholly satiric, no doubt, in his *Tunning* (that is to say, the brewing) of *Elynor Rummyngh*, emphasised all her bad points, for it is hardly credible that even the rustics of the Middle Ages would have rushed so enthusiastically for her ale if it had been brewed in the way he describes.

His long, rambling jingles, done in grievous spelling, picture her as a very ugly and filthy old person, with a face sufficiently grotesque to unnerve a strong man :

For her viságe  
It would aswage  
A manne's couráge.  
Her lothely lere  
Is nothyng clere,  
But vgly of chere,  
Droupy and drowsy,  
Scuruy and lowsy ;  
Her face all bowsy,  
Comely crynkled,  
Woundersly wrynkled,  
Lyke a rost pygges eare  
Brystled wyth here.  
Her lewde lyppes twayne,  
They slauer, men sayne,  
Lyke a ropy rayne :  
A glummy glayre :

She is vgly fayre :  
 Her nose somdele hoked,  
 And camously croked,  
 Neuer stoppynge,  
 But euer droppynge :  
 Her skin lose and slacke,  
 Grayned like a sacke ;  
 Wyth a crooked backe.

Her eyen jowndy  
 Are full vnsoundy,  
 For they are blered ;  
 And she grey-hered :  
 Jawed like a jetty,  
 A man would haue pytty  
 To se how she is gumbed  
 Fyngered and thumbed  
 Gently joyned,  
 Gresed and annoynted  
 Vp to the knockels ;  
 The bones of her huckles  
 Lyke as they were with buckles  
 Together made fast ;

Her youth is farre past.  
 Foted lyke a plane,  
 Legged lyke a crane ;  
 And yet she wyll iet  
 Lyke a silly fet.

Her huke of Lincoln grene,  
 It had been hers I wene,  
 More than fourty yere ;  
 And so it doth apere.  
 For the grene bare thredes  
 Loke lyke sere wedes,  
 Wyddered lyke hay,  
 The woll worne away :  
 And yet I dare saye  
 She thinketh herselfe gaye.

She dryueth downe the dewe

With a payre of heles  
 As brode as two wheles ;  
 She hobles as a gose  
 Wyth her blanket trose  
 Ouer the falowe :  
 Her shone smered wyth talowe,  
 Gresed vpon dyrt  
 That bandeth her skyrt.

And this comely dame  
 I vnderstande her name



ELYNOR RUMMYNG.

Is Elynor Rummynge,  
 At home in her wonnynge :  
 And as men say,  
 She dwelt in Sothray,  
 In a certain stede  
 Bysyde Lederhede,  
 She is a tonnysh gyb,  
 The Deuyll and she be syb,  
 But to make vp my tale,  
 She breweth nappy ale,  
 And maketh port-sale  
 To travelers and tynkers,  
 To sweters and swynkers,  
 And all good ale-drynkers,

That wyll nothyng spare,  
 But drynke tyll they stare  
 And bryngē themselves bare,  
 Wyth, now away the mare  
 And let vs slēy care  
 As wyse as a hare.

Come who so wyll  
 To Elynor on the hyll  
 Wyth Fyll the cup, fyll  
 And syt there by styll.  
 Erly and late  
 Thyther cometh Kate  
 Cysly, and Sare  
 Wyth theyr legges bare  
 And also theyr fete.

Some haue no mony  
 For theyr ale to pay,  
 That is a shrewd aray ;  
 Elynor swered, Nay,  
 Ye shall not beare away  
 My ale for nought,  
 By hym that me bought !  
 Wyth, Hey, dogge, hey,  
 Hane these hogges away<sup>1</sup>  
 Wyth, Get me a staffe,  
 The swyne eate my drafte !  
 Stryke the hogges wyth a clubbe,  
 They haue dranke up my swyllyn tubbe.

The unlovely Elynor scraped up all manner of filth into her mash-tub, mixed it together with her

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<sup>1</sup> This is an ancient parallel with

“ Who comes there ? ”  
 “ Grenadier.”  
 “ What d’ye want ? ”  
 “ Pot o’ beer.”  
 “ Where’s yer money ? ”  
 “ Haven’t got.”  
 “ Get away, you drunken sot ! ”

“mangy fists,” and sold the result as ale. It is proverbial that “there is no accounting for tastes,” and it would appear as though the district had a peculiar liking for this kind of brew. They would have it somehow, even if they had to bring their food and furniture for it :

Insteede of quoyne and mony,  
Some bryng her a coney,  
And some a pot wyth honey ;  
Some a salt, some a spoone,  
Some theyr hose, some theyr shoone ;  
Some run a good trot  
Wyth skyllet or pot :  
Some fyll a bag-full  
Of good Lemster wool ;  
An huswyfe of trust  
When she is athyrst  
Such a web can spyn  
Her thryft is full thyn.  
Some go strayght thyther  
Be it slaty or slydder,  
They hold the hyghway ;  
They care not what men say,  
Be they as be may  
Some loth to be espyd,  
Start in at the backesyde,  
Over hedge and pale,  
And all for good ale.  
Some brought walnuts,  
Some apples, some pears,  
And some theyr clyppying shears.  
Some brought this and that,  
Some brought I wot ne're what,  
Some brought theyr husband's hat.

and so forth, for hundreds of lines more.

The old inn—still nothing more than an ale-house—is in part as old as the poem, but has been

so patched and repaired in all the intervening centuries that nothing of any note is to be seen within. A very old pictorial sign, framed and glazed, and fixed against the wall of the gable, represents the ill-favoured landlady, and is inscribed: "Elynor Rummyn dwelled here, 1520."

Accounts we have of the fourteenth-century inns show that the exclusive, solitary Englishman was not then allowed to exist. Guests slept in dormitories, very much as the inmates of common lodging-houses generally do now, and, according to the evidence of old prints, knew nothing of nightshirts, and lay in bed naked. They purchased their food in something the same way as a modern "dosser" in a Rowton House, but their manners and customs were peculiarly offensive. The floors were strewed with rushes; and as guests generally threw their leavings there, and the rushes themselves were not frequently removed, those old interiors must have been at times exceptionally noisome.

Inn-keepers charged such high prices for this accommodation, and for the provisions they sold, that the matter grew scandalous, and at last, in the reign of Edward the Third, in 1349, and again in 1353, statutes were passed ordering hostelries to be content with moderate gain. The "great and outrageous dearth of victuals kept up in all the realm by innkeepers and other retailers of victuals, to the great detriment of the people travelling across the realm" was such that no less a penalty would serve than that any "hosteler

or herberger" should pay "double of what he received to the party damaged." Mayors and bailiffs, and justices learned in the law, were to "enquire in all places, of all and singular, of the deeds and outrages of hostellers and their kind,"



THE "RUNNING HORSE," LEATHERHEAD.

but it does not appear that matters were greatly improved.

It will be observed that two classes of innkeepers are specified in those ordinances. The "hosteler" was the ordinary innkeeper; the "herberger" was generally a more or less important and well-to-do merchant who added to his income by "harbouring"—that is to say, by boarding and lodging—strangers, the "paying guests" of that age. We may dimly perceive something of the

trials and hardships of old-time travel in that expression “ harbouring.” The traveller then came to his rest as a ship comes into harbour from stormy seas. The better-class travellers, coming into a town, preferred the herberger’s more select table to the common publicity of the ordinary hostelry, and the herbergers themselves were very keen to obtain such guests, some even going to the length of maintaining touts to watch the arrival of strangers, and bid for custom. This was done both openly and in an underhand fashion, the more rapacious among the herbergers employing specious rogues who, entering into conversation with likely travellers at the entrance of a town, would pretend to be fellow-countrymen and so, on the understanding of a common sympathy, recommending them to what they represented to be the best lodgings. Travellers taking such recommendations generally found themselves in exceptionally extortionate hands. These practices early led to “ herbergers” being regulated by law, on much the same basis as the hostlers.

Not many records of travelling across England in the fourteenth century have survived. Indeed the only detailed one we have, and that is merely a return of expenses, surviving in Latin manuscript at Merton College, Oxford, concerns itself with nothing but the cost of food and lodging at the inns and the disbursements on the road, made by the Warden and two fellows who, with four servants —the whole party on horseback—in September,

1331, travelled to Durham and back on business connected with the college property. The outward journey took them twelve days. They crossed the Humber at the cost of 8*d.*, to the ferry: beds for the entire party of seven generally came to 2*d.* a night, beer the same, wine  $1\frac{1}{4}d.$ , meat  $5\frac{1}{2}d.$ , candles  $\frac{1}{4}d.$ , fuel 2*d.*, bread 4*d.*, and fodder for the horses 10*d.*

## CHAPTER III

### GENERAL HISTORY OF INNS

THE mediæval hostelries, generally planned in the manner of the old galleried inns that finally went out of fashion with the end of the coaching age, consisting of a building enclosing a courtyard, and entered only by a low and narrow archway, which in its turn was closed at nightfall by strong, bolt-studded doors, are often said to owe their form to the oriental “caravanserai,” a type of building familiar to Englishmen taking part in the Crusades.

But it is surely not necessary to go so far afield for an origin. The “caravanserai” was originally a type of Persian inn where caravans put up for the night: and as security against robbers was the first need of such a country and such times, a courtyard capable of being closed when necessary against unwelcome visitors was clearly indicated as essential. Persia, however, and oriental lands in general, were not the only countries where in those dark centuries robbers, numerous and bold, or even such undesirables as rebels against the existing order of things, were to be reckoned with, and England had no immunity from such dangers. In such a state of affairs, and in times when

private citizens were careful always to bolt and bar themselves in ; when great lords dwelt behind moats, drawbridges, and battlemented walls ; and when even ecclesiastic and collegiate institutions were designed with the idea that they might ultimately have to be defended, it is quite reasonable to suppose that innkeepers were capable of evolving a plan for themselves by which they and their guests, and the goods of their guests, might reckon on a degree of security.

This was the type of hostelry that, apart from the mere tavern, or alehouse, remained for so many centuries typical of the English good-class inns. It was at once, in a sense—to compare old times with new—the hotel and railway-station of an age that knew neither railways nor the class of house we style “ hotel.” It was the fine flower of the hostelling business, and to it came and went the carriers’ waggons, the early travellers riding horseback, and, in the course of time, as the age of wonderful inventions began to dawn, the stage and mail-coaches. Travellers of the most gentle birth, equally with those rich merchants and clothiers who were the greatest travellers in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, inned at such establishments. It was at one such that Archbishop Leighton ended. He had said, years before, that “if he must choose a place to die in, it should be an inn, it looking like a pilgrim’s going home, to whom this world was an inn, and who was weary of the noise and confusion of it.” He died, that good and

gentle man, at the “Bell” in Warwick Lane, in 1684.

London, once rich in hostelries of this type, has now but one. In fine, it is not in the metropolis that the amateur of old inns of any kind would nowadays seek with great success; although, well within the memory of most people, it was exceptionally well furnished with them. It was neither good taste nor good business that, in 1897, demolished the “Old Bell,” Holborn, a pretty old-world galleried inn that maintained until the very last an excellent trade in all branches of licensed-victualling; and would have continued so to do had it not been that the greed for higher ground-rent ordained the ending of it, in favour of the giant (and very vulgar) building now occupying the spot where it stood. That may have been a remunerative transaction for the ground-landlord; but, looking at these commercial-minded clearances in a broader way, they are nothing less than disastrous. If, to fill some private purses over-full, you thus callously rebuild historic cities, their history becomes merely a matter for the printed page, and themselves to the eye nothing but a congeries of crowded streets where the motor-omnibuses scream and clash and stink, and citizens hustle to get a living. History, without visible ancient buildings to assure the sceptical modern traveller that it is not wholly lies, will never by itself draw visitors.

Holborn, where the “Old Bell” stood, was, until quite recent years, a pleasant threshold to

the City. There stood Furnival's Inn, that quiet quadrangle of chambers, with the staid and respectable Wood's Hotel. Next door was Ridler's Hotel, with pleasant bay-window looking upon the street, and across the way, in Fetter Lane, remained the "White Horse" coaching inn; very much down on its luck in its last years, but interesting to prowling strangers enamoured of the antique and out-of-date.

The vanished interest of other corners in London might be enlarged upon, but it is too melancholy a picture. Let us to the Borough High Street, and, resolutely refusing to think for the moment of the many queer old galleried inns that not so long since remained there, come to that sole survivor, the "George."

You would never by mere chance find the "George," for it has no frontage to the street, and lies along one side of a yard not at first sight very prepossessing, and, in fact, used in these days for the unsentimental purposes of a railway goods-receiving depot. This, however, is the old yard once entirely in use for the business of the inn.

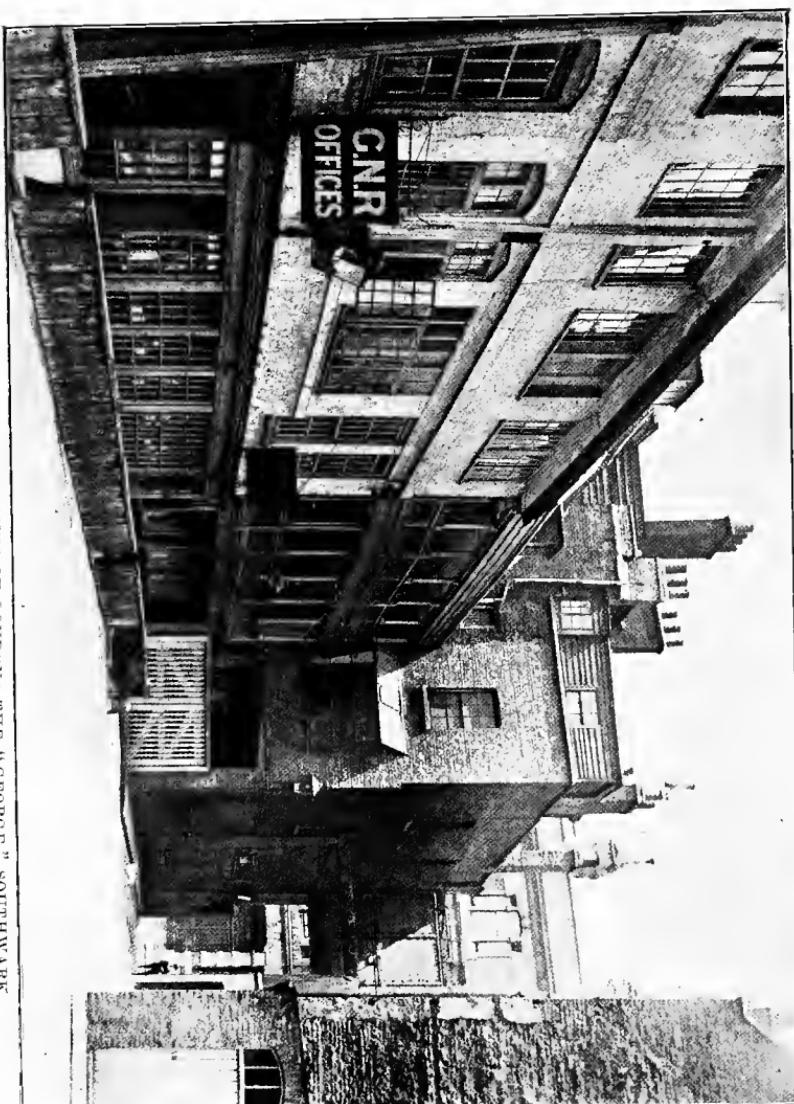
The "George," as it now stands, is the successor of a pre-Reformation inn that, formerly the "St. George," became secularised in the time of Henry the Eighth, when saints, even patron saints, were under a cloud. It is an exceedingly long range of buildings, dating from the seventeenth century, and in two distinct and different styles: a timbered, wooden-balustraded gallery in two storeys, and a white-washed brick continuation.

The long ground - floor range of windows to the kitchen, the bar, and the coffee-room, is, as seen in the illustration, protected from any accidents in the manœuvring of the railway waggons by a continuous bulkhead of sleepers driven into the ground. It is pleasing to be able to bear witness to the thriving trade that continues to be done in this sole ancient survivor of the old Southwark galleried inns, and to note that, however harshly fate, as personified by rapacious landlords, has dealt with its kind, the old-world savour of the inn is thoroughly appreciated by those not generally thought sentimental persons, the commercial men who dine and lunch, and the commercial travellers who sleep, here.

But, however pleasing the old survivals in brick and stone, in timber and plaster, may be to the present generation, we seem, by the evidence left us in the literature and printed matter of an earlier age, to have travelled far from gross to comparatively ideal manners.

The manners common to all classes in old times would scarce commend themselves to modern folk. We get a curious glimpse of them in one of a number of *Manuals of Foreign Conversation* for the use of travellers, published towards the close of the sixteenth century in Flanders, then a country of great trading importance, sending forth commercial travellers and others to many foreign lands. One of these handy books, styled, rather formidably, *Colloquia et dictionariolum septem linguarum*, including, as its title indicates,





THE LAST OF THE OLD GALLERIED INNS OF LONDON: THE "GEORGE," SOUTHWARK.  
*Photo by T. W. Tyrrell.*

conversation in seven languages, was so highly successful that seven editions of it, dating from 1589, are known. The traveller in England, coming to his inn, is found talking on the subject of trade and civil wars, and at length desires to retire to rest. The conversation itself is sufficiently strange, and is made additionally startling by the capital W's that appear in unconventional places. "Sir," says the traveller, "by your leave, I am sum What euell at eafe." To which the innkeeper replies: "Sir, if you be ill at ease, go and take your rest, your chambre is readie. Jone, make a good fier in his chambre, and let him lacke nothing."

Then we have a dialogue with "Jone," the chambermaid, in this wise:

*Traveller*: My fhee frinde, is my bed made? is it good?

"Yea, Sir, it is a good feder bed, the scheetes be very cleane."

*Traveller*: I shake as a leafe upon the tree. Warme my kerchif and bynde my head well. Soft, you binde it to harde, bryng my pillow and cover mee Well: pull off my hosen and Warme my bed: draWe the curtines and pinthen With a pin.

Where is the camber pot?

Where is the priuie?

*Chambermaid*: FolloW mee, and I Will fheW you the Way: go up ftreight, you shall finde them at the right hand. If you see them not you shall fmell them Well enough. Sir, doth it please you to haue no other thing? are you Wel?

*Traveller* : Yea, my shee frinde, put out the candell, and come nearer to mee.

*Chambermaid* : I Wil put it out When I am out of the chamber. What is your pleasure, are you not Well enough yet ?

*Traveller* : My head lyeth to loWe, lift up a little the bolfter, I can not lie so loWe.—My shee friende, kiffe me once, and I shall fleape the better.

*Chambermaid* : Sleape, fleape, you are not sicke, feeing that you speake of kiffyng. I had rather die then to kiffe a man in his bed, or in any other place. Take your rest in God's name, God geeue you good night and goode rest.

*Traveller* : I thank you, fayre mayden.

In the morning we have “Communication at the opryfing,” the traveller calling to the boy to “Drie my shirt, that I may rise.” Then, “Where is the horse-keeper? go tell him that hee my horse leade to the river.”

Departing, our traveller does not forget the chambermaid, and asks, “Where is ye maiden ? hold my shee freend, ther is for your paines. Knave, bring hither my horfe, have you dreffed him Well ?” “Yea, sir,” says the knave, “he did Wante nothing.”

Anciently people of note and position, with large acquaintance among their own class, expected, when they travelled, to be received at the country houses along their route, if they should so desire, and still, at the close of the seventeenth century, and at the beginning of the eighteenth, the custom

was not unknown. Even should the master be away from home, the hospitality of his house was not usually withheld. From these old and discontinued customs we may, perhaps, derive that one by no means obsolete, but rather still on the increase, of guests “tipping” the servants of country houses.

This possibility of a traveller making use of another man’s house as his inn was fast dying out in England in the time of Charles the Second. Probably it had never been so abused in this country as in Scotland, where innkeepers petitioned Parliament, complaining, in the extraordinary language at that time obtaining in Scotland, “that the liegis travelland in the realme quhen they cum to burrowis and throughfairis, herbreis thame not in hostillaries, but with their acquaintance and friendis.”

An enactment was accordingly passed in 1425, forbidding, under a penalty of forty shillings, all travellers resorting to burgh towns to lodge with friends or acquaintances, or in any place but the “hostillaries,” unless, indeed, they were persons of consequence, with a great retinue, in which case they personally might accept the hospitality of friends, provided that their “horse and meinze” were sent to the inns.

When the custom of seeking the shelter, as a matter of course, of the country mansion fell into disuse, so, conversely, did that of naming inns after the local Lord of the Manor come into fashion. Then, in a manner emblematic of the traveller’s

change from the hospitality of the mansion to that of the inn, mine host adopted the heraldic coat from the great man's portal, and called his house the “—— Arms.” It has been left to modern times, times in which heraldry has long ceased to be an exact science, to perpetrate such absurdities as the “Bricklayers' Arms,” the “Drovers' Arms,” and the like, appropriated to a class of person unknown officially to the College of Heralds.

According to Fynes Morison, who wrote in 1617, we held then, in this country, a pre-eminence in the trade and art of innkeeping: “The world,” he said, “affords not such inns as England hath, for as soon as a passenger comes the servants run to him: one takes his horse, and walks him till he be cold, then rubs him and gives him meat, but let the master look to this point. Another gives the traveller his private chamber and kindles his fire, the third pulls off his boots and makes them clean; then the host or hostess visits him—if he will eat with the host—or at a common table it will be 4*d.* and 6*d.* If a gentleman has his own chamber, his ways are consulted, and he has music, too, if he likes.”

In short, Morison wrote of English inns just anterior to the time of Samuel Pepys, who travelled much in his day, and tells us freely, in his appreciative way, of the excellent appointments, the music, the good fare and the comfortable beds he, in general, found.

But this era in which Morison wrote was a trying time for all innkeepers and taverners. The

story of it is so remarkable that it repays a lengthy treatment.

In our own age it is customary to many otherwise just and fair-minded people to look upon the innkeeper as a son of a Belial, a sinner who should be kept in outer darkness and made to sit in sackcloth and ashes, in penance for other people's excesses. On the one side he has the cormorants of the Inland Revenue plucking out his vitals, and generally, if it be a "tied" house, on the other a Brewery Company, selling him the worst liquors at the best prices, and threatening to turn him out if he does not maintain a trade of so many barrels a month. Always, from the earliest times, he has been the mark for satire and invective, has been licensed, sweated, regulated, and generally put on the chain; but he probably had never so bad a time as that he experienced in the last years of James the First. Already innkeepers were licensed at Quarter Sessions, but in 1616 it occurred to one Giles Mompesson, the time-serving Member of Parliament for the rotten borough of Great Bedwin, in Wiltshire, that much plunder could be extracted from them and used to replenish the Royal Exchequer, then at a low ebb, if he could obtain the grant of a monopoly of licensing inns, over-riding the old-established functions in that direction of the magistrates.

Giles Mompesson was no altruist, or at the best a perverted one, who put his own interpretation upon that good old maxim, "Who works for others works for himself." He foresaw that while

such a State monopoly, under his own control, might bring a bountiful return to the State, it must enrich himself and those associated with him. He imparted the brilliant idea to that dissolute royal favourite, George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, who succeeded in obtaining him a patent for a special commission to grant licenses to keepers of inns and ale-houses. The patent was issued, not without great opposition, and the licensing fees were left to the discretion of Mompesson and his two fellow-commissioners, with the only proviso that four-fifths of the returns were to go to the Exchequer. Shortly afterwards Mompesson himself was knighted by the King, in order, as Bacon wrote, “that he may better fight with the Bulls and the Bears and the Saracen’s Heads, and such fearful creatures.” Much virtue and power, of the magisterial sort, in a knighthood ; likely, we consider, King and commissioners, and all concerned in the issuing of this patent, to impress and overawe poor Bung, and therefore we, James the First, most sacred Majesty by the grace of God, do, on Newmarket Heath, say, “Rise, Sir Giles !”

The three commissioners wielded full authority. There was no appeal from that triumvirate, who at their will refused or granted licenses, and charged for them what they pleased, hungering after that one-fifth. They largely increased the number of inns, woefully oppressed honest men, wrung heavy fines from all for merely technical and inadvertent infractions of the licensing laws,

and granted new licenses at exorbitant rates to infamous houses that had but recently been deprived of them. During more than four years these iniquities continued, side by side with the working of other monopolies, granted from time to time, but at last the gathering storm of indignation burst, in the House of Commons, in February, 1621. That was a Parliament already working with the leaven of a Puritanism which was presently to leaven the whole lump of English governance in a drastic manner then little dreamt of; and it was keen to scent and to abolish abuses.

Thus we see the' House, very stern and vindictive, inquiring into the conduct and working of the by now notorious Commission. In the result Momesson and his associates were found to have prosecuted 3,320 innkeepers for technical infractions of obsolete statutes, and to have been guilty of many misdemeanours. Momesson appealed to the mercy of the House, but was placed under arrest by the Sergeant-at-Arms while that assembly deliberated how it should act. Momesson himself clearly expected to be severely dealt with, for at the earliest moment evaded his arrest and was off, across the Channel, where he learnt—no doubt with cynical amusement—that he had been “banished.”

The judgment of the two Houses of Parliament was that he should be expelled the Honse, and be degraded from his knighthood and conducted on horseback along the Strand with his face to the

horse's tail. Further, he was to be fined £10,000, and for ever held an infamous person.

Meanwhile, if Parliament failed to lay the chief offender by the heels, it did at least succeed in putting hand upon, and detaining, one of his equally infamous associates, himself a knight, and accordingly susceptible of some dramatic degradation, beyond anything to be possibly wreaked upon any common fellow. Sir Francis Mitchell, attorney-at-law, was consigned to the Tower, and then brought forth from it to have his spurs hacked off and thrown away, his sword broken over his head, and himself publicly called no longer knight, but "knave." Then to the Fleet Prison, with certainty on the morrow of a public procession to Westminster, himself the central object, mounted, with face to tail, on the back of the sorriest horse to be found, and the target for all the missiles of the crowd: a prospect and programme duly realised and carried out.

Mompesson we may easily conceive hearing of, and picturing, all these things, in his retreat over sea, and congratulating himself on his prompt flight. But he was, after all, treated with the most extraordinary generosity. The same year, the fine of £10,000 was assigned by the House to his father-in-law (which we suspect was an oblique way of remitting it) and in 1623 he is found petitioning to be allowed to return to England. He was allowed to return for a period of three months, on condition that it was to be solely on his private affairs, but he was no sooner back than

he impudently began to put his old licensing patent in force again. On August 10th he was granted an extension of three months, but over-stayed it, and was at last, February 8th, 1624, ordered to quit the country within five days. It remains uncertain whether he complied with this, or not, but he soon returned; not, however, to again trouble public affairs, for he returned to Wiltshire and died there, obscurely, about 1651. He lives in literature, in Massinger's play, *A New Way to pay Old Debts*, as "Sir Giles Overreach."

## CHAPTER IV

### THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

THE inns of old time, serving as they did the varied functions of clubs and assembly-rooms and places of general resort, in addition to that of hotel, were often, at times when controversies ran high, very turbulent places.

The manners and customs prevailing in the beginning of the eighteenth century may be imagined from an affray which befell at the "Raven," Shrewsbury, in 1716, when two officers of the Dragoons insisted in the public room of the inn, upon a Mr. Andrew Swift and a Mr. Robert Wood, apothecary, drinking "King George, and Damnation to the Jacobites." The civilians refused, whereupon those military men drew their swords, but—swords notwithstanding—they were very handsomely thrashed, and one was placed upon the fire, and not only had his breeches burnt through in a conspicuous place, but had his person toasted. The officers then, we learn, "went off, leaving their hatts, wigs and swords (which were broke) behind them."

One did not, it will be gathered from the above, easily in those times lead the Quiet Life; but that was a heated occasion, and we were then

really upon the threshold of that fine era when inns, taverns, and coffee-houses were the resort, not merely of travellers or of thirsty souls, but of wits and the great figures of eighteenth-century literature, who were convivial as well as literary. It was a great, and, as it seems to the present century, a curious, time ; when men of the calibre of Addison, of Goldsmith and of Johnson, acknowledged masters in classic and modern literature, smoked and drank to excess in the public parlours of inns. But those were the clubs of that age, and that was an age in which, although the producers of literature were miserably rewarded, their company and conversation were sought and listened to with respect.

When Dr. Johnson declared that a seat in a tavern chair was the height of human felicity, his saying carried a special significance, lost upon the present age. He was thinking, not only of a comfortable sanded parlour, a roaring fire, and plenty of good cheer and good company, but also of the circle of humbly appreciative auditors who gathered round an accepted wit, hung upon his words, offered themselves as butts for his ironic or satiric humour, and—stood treat. The great wits of the eighteenth century expected subservience in their admirers, and only began to coruscate, to utter words of wisdom or inspired nonsense, or to scatter sparkling quips and jests, when well primed with liquor—at the expense of others. The felicity of Johnson found in a tavern chair was derived, therefore, chiefly from the

homage of his attendant humble Boswells, and from the fact that they paid the reckoning ; and was, perhaps, to some modern ideas, a rather shameful idea of happiness.

Johnson, who did not love the country, and thought one green field very like another green field, when he spoke of a tavern chair was of course thinking of London taverns. He would have found no sufficient audience in its wayside fellow, which indeed was apt, in his time and for long after, to be somewhat rough and ready, and, when you had travelled a little far afield, became a very primitive and indeed barbarous place.

At Llannon, in 1797, those sketching and note-taking friends, Rowlandson and Wigstead, touring North and South Wales in search of the picturesque, found it, not unmixed with dirt and discomfit, at the inns. Indeed, it was only at one town in Wales—the town of Neath—that Wigstead found himself able to declare, “with strict propriety,” that the house was comfortable. Comfort and decency fled the inn at Llannon, abashed. This, according to Wigstead, was the way of it: “The cook on our arrival was in the suds, and, with unwiped hands, reached down a fragment of mutton for our repast: a piece of ham was lost, but after long search was found amongst the worsted stockings and sheets on the board.”

Then “a little child was sprawling in a dripping-pan which seemed recently taken from the fire : the fat in this was destined to fry our eggs in.

Hunger itself even was blunted," and the travellers left those delicacies almost untouched. Not even the bread was without its surprises. "I devoted my attention to a brown loaf," says Wigstead, "but on cutting into it was surprised to find a ball of carroty-coloured wool; and to what animal it had belonged I was at a loss to determine. Our table-cloth had served the family for at least a month, and our sitting-room was everywhere decorated with the elegant relics of a last night's smoking society, as yet unremoved."

All this was pretty bad, but perhaps even the baby in the dripping-pan, the month-old table-cloth, and the hank of wool in the loaf were to be preferred to what they had experienced at Festiniog. They had not at first purposed to make a halt at that place, having planned to stay the night at Tan-y-Bwlch, where the inn commanded a view over a lovely wooded vale. The perils and the inconveniences of the vile road by which they had come faded into insignificance when they drew near, and they began to reckon upon the comforts of a good supper and good beds at Tan-y-Bwlch. They even disputed whether the supper should be chickens or chops, but all such vain arguments and contentions faded away when they drew near and a stony-faced landlord declared he had no room for them.

We can easily sympathise here with those travellers in search of the picturesque, for we have all met with the like strokes of Fate. No doubt the beauties of the view suddenly obscured

themselves, as will happen when you can get nothing to eat or drink; and probably they thought of Dr. Johnson, who a few years earlier had held the most beautiful landscape capable of being improved by a good inn in the foreground. But a good inn where they cannot or will not receive you, is, in such a situation, sorrow's crown of sorrow, an aggravation and a mockery.

It was a tragical position, and down the sounding alleys of time vibrates strange chords of reminiscence in the breasts of even modern tourists of any experience. We too, have suffered; and many an one may say, with much tragical meaning, "*et ego in Arcadia vixit.*"

Alas! for the frustrated purpose of Messrs. Rowlandson and Wigstead, 'Tan-y-Bwlch could not, or would not, receive them, and they had no choice but to journey three more long Welsh miles to Festiniog in the rain. It sometimes rains in Wales, and when it does, it rarely knows when to leave off.

Arrived there, they almost passed the inn, in the gathering darkness, mistaking it for a barn or an outhouse; and when they made to enter, they were confronted by an extraordinary landlady with the appearance of one of the three witches in *Macbeth*.

"Could they have beds?"

Reluctantly she said they could, telling them (what we know to be true enough) that she

supposed they only came there because there was no accommodation at Tan-y-Bwlch.

The travellers made no reply to that damning accusation, and hid their incriminating blushes in the congenial gloom of the fast-falling night. It was a situation in which, if you come to consider it, no wise man would give “back answers.” You have a landlady who, for the proverbial two pins, or even less, would cast you forth; and when so thrust into the inhospitable night, you have seventeen mountainous miles to go, in a drenching rain, before any other kind of asylum is reached.

Wigstead remarks that they “were not a little satisfied at being under any kind of roof,” and the words seem woefully inadequate to the occasion.

There were no chops that night for supper, nor chickens; and they fed, with what grace they could summon up, on a “small leg of starved mutton and a duck,” which, by the scent of them, had been cooked a fortnight. For sauce they had hunger only.

“Our bedrooms,” says Wigstead, “were most miserable indeed: the rain poured in at every tile in the ceiling,” and the sheets were literally wringing wet; so that, in Wigstead’s elegant phrasing, they “thought it most prudent to sacrifice to *Somnus* in our own garments, between blankets”: which may perhaps be translated, into everyday English, to mean that they slept in their own clothes.

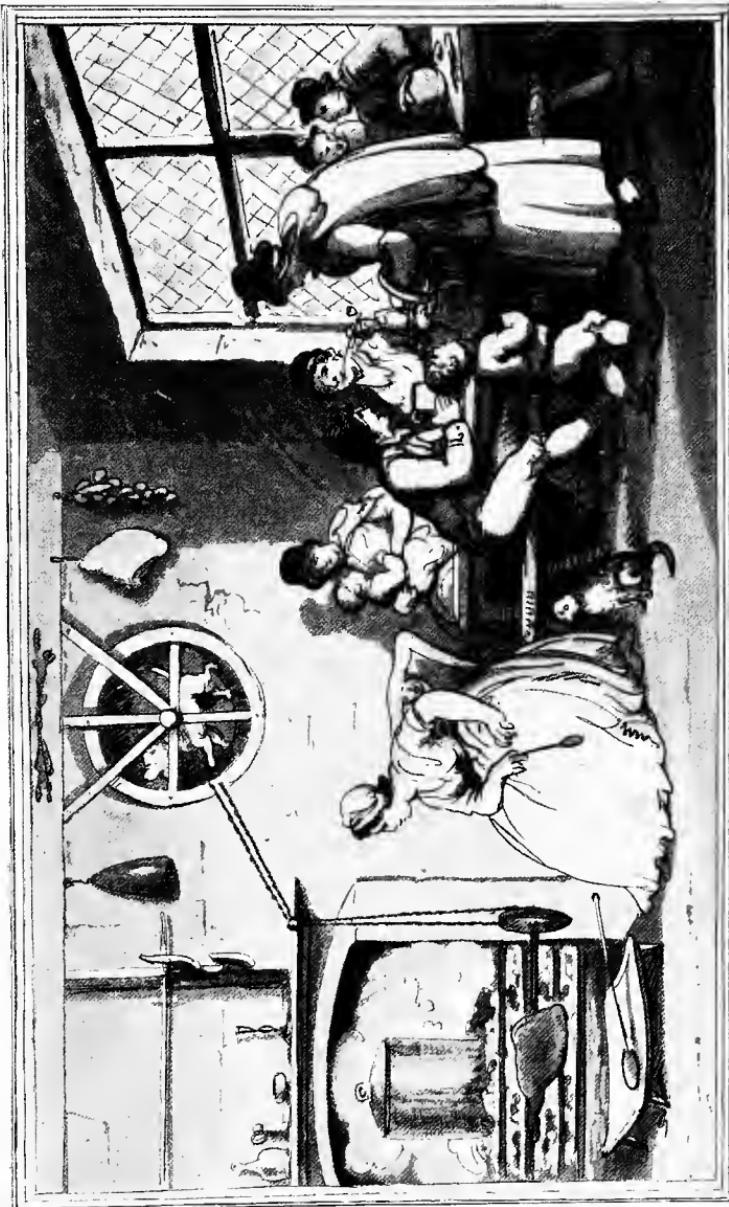
They saw strange sights on that wild tour, and,

in the course of their hazardous travels through the then scarcely civilised interior of the Principality, came to the "pleasant village" of Neweastle Emlyn, Carmarthenshire, where they found a "decent inn" in whose kitchen they remarked a dog acting as turnspit. That the dogs so employed did not particularly relish the work is evident in Wigstead's remark: "Great care must be taken that this animal does not observe the cook approach the larder. If he does, he immediately hides himself for the remainder of the day," acting, in fact, like a professional "unemployed" when offered a job!

A familiar sight in the kitchen of any considerable inn of the long ago was the turnspit dog, who, like the caged mouse or squirrel with his recreation-wheel, revolved a kind of treadwheel which, in this instance, was connected with apparatus for turning the joints roasting at the fire, and formed not so much recreation as extremely hard work. The dogs commonly used for this purpose were of the long-bodied, short-legged, Dachshund type.

Machinery, in the form of bottle-jaeks revolved by clockwork, came to the relief of those hard-working dogs so long ago that all knowledge of turnspits, except such as may be gleaned from books of reference, is now lost, and illustrations of them performing their duties are exceedingly rare. Rowlandson's spirited drawing is, on that account, doubly welcome.

Turnspits were made the subject of a very



THE KITCHEN OF A COUNTRY INN, 1797 : SHOWING THE TURNSPIT DOG.  
*From the engraving after Rowlandson.*



illuminating notice, a generation or so back, by a former writer on country life: "How well do I recollect," he says, "in the days of my youth watching the operations of a turnspit at the house of a worthy old Welsh clergyman in Worcestershire, who taught me to read! He was a good man, wore a bushy wig, black worsted stockings, and large plated buckles in his shoes. As he had several boarders as well as day-scholars, his two turnspits had plenty to do. They were long-bodied, crook-legged and ugly dogs, with a suspicious, unhappy look about them, as if they were weary of the task they had to do, and expected every moment to be seized upon, to perform it. Cooks in those days, as they are said to be at present, were very cross; and if the poor animal, wearied with having a larger joint than usual to turn, stopped for a moment, the voice of the cook might be heard, rating him in no very gentle terms. When we consider that a large, solid piece of beef would take at least three hours before it was properly roasted, we may form some idea of the task a dog had to perform in turning a wheel during that time. A pointer has pleasure in finding game, the terrier worries rats with eagerness and delight, and the bull-dog even attacks bulls with the greatest energy, while the poor turnspit performs his task with compulsion, like a culprit on a tread-wheel, subject to scolding or beating if he stops a moment to rest his weary limbs, and is then kicked about the kitchen when the task is over."

The work being so hard, how ever did the dogs allow themselves to be put to it? The training was, after all, extremely simple. You first, as Mrs. Glasse might say, caught your dog. That, it will be agreed, was indispensable. Then you put him, ignorant and uneducated, into the wheel, and in company with him a live coal, which burnt his legs if he stood still. He accordingly tried to race away from it, and the quicker he spun the wheel round in his efforts the faster followed the coal: so that, by dint of much painful experience, he eventually learned the (comparatively) happy medium between standing still and going too fast. "These dogs," it was somewhat unnecessarily added, "were by no means fond of their profession." Of course they were not! Does the convict love his crank or treadmill, or the galley-slave his oar and bench?

The turnspit was once so well-known an institution that he found an allusion in poetry, and an orator was likened, in uncomplimentary fashion, to one:

His arguments in silly circles run,  
Still round and round, and end where they begun.  
So the poor turnspit, as the wheel runs round,  
The more he gains, the more he loses ground.

These unfortunate dogs acquired a preternatural intelligence. A humorous, but probably not true, story is told, illustrating this. It was at Bath, and some of them had accompanied their mistresses to church, where the lesson chanced

to be the tenth chapter of Ezekiel, in which there is an amazing deal about self-propelled chariots, and wheels. When the dogs first heard the word "wheel" they started up in alarm; on its occurring a second time they howled dolefully, and at the third instance they all rushed from the church.

Strangely modern appear the grievances raised against innkeepers in the old times. The bills they presented were early pronounced exorbitant, and so, in spite of measures intended for the relief of travellers, they remained. Indeed, throughout the centuries, until the present day, the curious in these matters will find, not unexpectedly, that innkeepers charged according to what they considered their guests would grumble at—and pay.

The eighteenth-century *locus classicus* in this sort is the account rendered to the Duc de Nivernais, the French Ambassador to England, who in 1762, coming to negotiate a treaty of peace, halted the night, on his way from Dover to London, at the "Red Lion," Canterbury.

For the night's lodging for twelve persons, with a frugal supper in which oysters, fowls, boiled mutton, poached eggs and fried whiting figure, the landlord presented an account of over £44. Our soldiers fought the Frenchman; mine host did his humble, non-combatant part, and fleeced him.

This truly magnificent bill has been preserved, not, let us hope, for the emulation of other hotel-

keepers, but by way of a “terrible example.” Here it is :

		£	s.	d.
Tea, coffee, and chocolate	.	1	4	0
Supper for self and servants	.	15	10	0
Bread and beer	.	3	0	0
Fruit	.	2	15	0
Wine and punch	.	10	8	8
Wax candles and charcoal	.	3	0	0
Broken glass and china	.	2	10	0
Lodging	.	1	7	0
Tea, coffee, and chocolate	.	2	0	0
Chaise and horses for the next stage	.	2	16	0
		<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
		44	10	8

The Duke paid the account without a murmur, only remarking that innkeepers at this rate should soon grow rich ; but news of this extraordinary charge was soon spread all over England. It was printed in the newspapers, amid other marvels, disasters and atrocities, and mine host of the “Red Lion,” like Byron in a later age, woke up one morning to find himself famous.

The country gentlemen, scandalised at his rapacity, boycotted his inn, and his brother innkeepers of Canterbury disowned him. The unfortunate man wrote to the *St. James's Chronicle*, endeavouring to justify himself, and complaining bitterly of the harm that had been wrought his business by the continual billeting of soldiers upon him. But it was in vain he protested ; his trade fell off, and he was ruined in six months.

Sometimes, too, there was a difference of opinion as to whether a bill had or had not

actually been paid, as we see by the following indignant letter:

### Normanton near Stamford.

Madam,

2<sup>d</sup> Sept<sup>r</sup> 1755.

My Lord Morton Received a Letter from you of the 5<sup>th</sup> Aug<sup>t</sup> inclosing a Bill drawn by you on his Lp for £6 1 11, and to make up this sum p<sup>r</sup> your Account annexed to the above-mentioned Letter, you charge twelve shillings for his Servant's eating, for which he is ready to Swear he paid you in full; then you charge for the Horses Hay for 35 Nights notwithstanding you was ordered to fend the horse out to grafs, and by the by when the horfe came to London he was so poor as if he had been quite neglected which seems probable as he mended soone after he came here; at any rate you have used my Lord ill in the whole affair, and if you or your Servants have committed any accidental mistake either in the Lads Board or the horses hay pray see to rectify it soon, because things of that sort not cleard up and satisfied are very hurtfull to People in your publick way especially with those to whom you have already been obliged, and who at any rate will not be imposed upon. I am—

Madam—

Your humble fert

JOHN MILNE.

To

Mrs Beaver  
at the Black Bull

free  
Morton.

Then there was Dover, notorious for high prices. "Thy cliffs, dear Dover! harbour and hotel," sang Byron, who bitterly remembered the

April 16 182

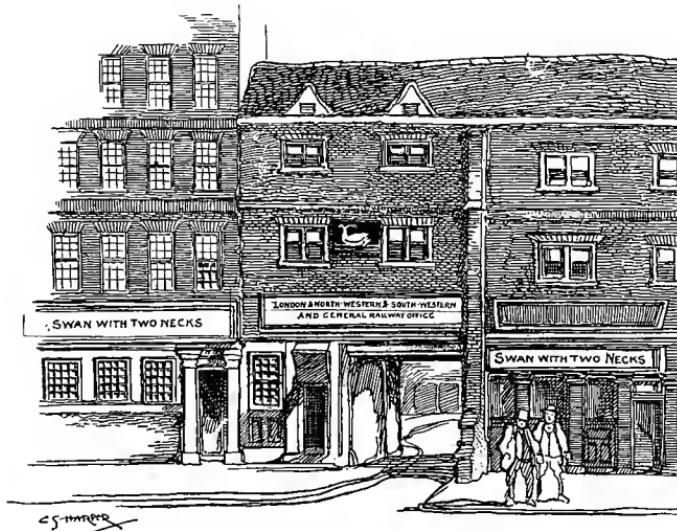
Swan with 2 Necks Lad Lane	£
John Palmer bill - - -	s
1 Hors & Hires at 12 per Nit	d
	12 3
1 part - - -	0 8
	0 12 11

FACSIMILE OF AN ACCOUNT RENDERED TO  
JOHN PALMER IN 1787.

"long, long bills, whence nothing is deducted." The "Ship," the hotel probably indicted by the poet, has long since disappeared, but that gigantic caravanserai, the "Lord Warden Hotel," could at one time, in its monumental charges, have afforded him material for another stanza. Magnificent as were the charges made by overreaching hosts elsewhere, they all paled their ineffectual sums-total before the sublime heights of the account rendered to Louis Napoleon when Prince-President of France. He merely remarked that it was truly princely, and paid.

If, on the other hand, that famous coaching hostelry, the "Swan with Two Necks," in Lad Lane, in the City of London, charged guests for

their accommodation as moderately as the accompanying bill for stabling a horse, the establishment should have been popular. This bill, printed here in *facsimile* from the original, was presented, April 16th, 1787, to John Palmer, the famous Post Office reformer, and shows that only one shilling and ninepence a night was charged. Yet he was at that time a famous man. Three years before he had established the first mail-coach, and was everywhere well known, and doubtless, in general, fair prey to renderers of bills.



THE LAST DAYS OF THE "SWAN WITH TWO NECKS."

The "Swan with Two Necks," whence many coaches set out, until the end of such things, was often known by waggish people as the "Wonderful Bird," and obtained its name from a perversion of

the “Swan with Two Nicks”: swans that swam the upper Thames and were the property of the Vintners’ Company being marked on their bills with two nicks, for identification. Lad Lane is now “Gresham Street,” but, apart from its mere name, is a lane still; but the old buildings of the “Swan with Two Necks” were pulled down in 1856.

## CHAPTER V

### LATTER DAYS

A host of writers have written in praise—and rightly in praise—of that fine flower of many centuries of innkeeping evolution, the Coaching Inn of the early and mid-nineteenth century. Hazlitt, Washington Irving, De Quincey, are all among the prophets; De Quincey, ceasing for the while his mystical apocalyptic style, mournfully lamenting the beginnings of the end that came even so long ago as his day, which, after all, ended not so very long ago, for although he seems so ancient, he died only in 1859. He writes, in early railway times, of “those days,” the days in question being that fine period in coaching and innkeeping, the “20’s of the nineteenth century.

“What cosy old parlours in those days,” he exclaims, “low-roofed, glowing with ample fires and fenced from the blasts of the doors by screens whose folding doors were, or seemed to be, infinite! What motherly landladies! won, how readily, to kindness the most lavish by the mere attractions of simplicity and youthful innocence, and finding so much interest in the bare circumstance of being a traveller at a childish age! Then what blooming young handmaidens; how

different from the knowing and worldly demireps of modern high roads ! And sometimes grey-headed, faithful waiters, how sincere and attentive by comparison with their flippant successors, the eternal ‘Coming, sir, coming,’ of our improved generation ! ”

They all tell the same tale ; those whose privilege it was to witness the meeting of the old order and the new.

“It was interesting,” says Mr. Locker-Lampson, writing of old times, “as the post-chaise drew up at the door of the roomy and comfortable hostel where we were to dine or sleep, to see Boniface and his better half smilingly awaiting us—Us in particular!—waiter and chamber-lasses grouped behind them. The landlady advances to the carriage-window with a cordial, self-respecting, ‘Will you please to alight.’ I remember that the landlord, who announced dinner, sometimes entered with the first dish and placed it on the table, bowing as he retired. Why, it all seems as if it were but yesterday ! Now it is gone for ever.”

Yes, irrevocably gone. Most of the old inns are gone too, and in their place, only too frequently, the traveller finds the modern, company-owned hotel, with a foreign manager who naturally takes no interest in the guests he, as a matter of fact, rarely sees, and with whom no guest could possibly foregather. In the modern barrack hotel the guest must necessarily be impersonal—one of a number going to swell the returns. No one quite willingly resigns himself

to being a mere number ; it is, indeed, one of the greatest of the convict's trials that he has lost his name and become identified only by a letter and a row of figures. Just in the same way, when we stay at hotels our self-respect is revolted at being received and dismissed with equal indifference, and there are many who would gladly resign the innovations of electric light and hydraulic lifts for that "welcome at an inn" of which Shenstone speaks. The philosophy of these regrets must, in fact, be sought in that illuminating phrase, "*Us in particular.*" We travellers are unwilling to be thought of merely as numbers identical with those of our bedrooms, and we like to believe, against our own better judgment, that the old-fashioned hosts and hostesses were pleased to see *us* ; which of course, in that special sense, was not the case. But a little make-believe sometimes goes a great way, and we need never, unless we have a mind to distress ourselves, seek the tongue of humbug in the cheek of courtesy.

The landlord of a good coaching house was a very important person indeed. Not seldom he was a large owner of horses and employer of labour ; a man of some culture and of considerable wealth. He was not only a good judge of wine and horseflesh, but of men and matters, and not merely the servant, but the self-respecting and respected friend, of the gentry in his neighbourhood. He was generally in evidence at his house, and he or his wife would have scorned the idea of appointing a manager to do their work. In those

days, and with such men along the road, it was an established rule of etiquette for the coming guest to invite his host to take a glass of wine with him and to exchange the news. But the type has become quite extinct, and even their old houses have been either demolished or else converted into private residences. Such hosts were Mr. and Mrs. Botham, of the "Windmill" at Salt Hill; or the long succession of notable landlords of the "Castle" at Marlborough, on the Bath Road; such were Clark, of the "Bell," Barnby Moor, and Holt of the "Wheatsheaf," Rushyford Bridge, on the Great North Road,—to name but those.

They were men, too, of considerable influence, and, when equipped with determination, wielded a certain amount of power, and brought great changes to pass; as when Robert Lawrence, of the "Lion" at Shrewsbury, by dint of great personal exertions, brought the line of travel between London and Dublin through Shrewsbury and Holyhead, instead of, as formerly, through Chester. He died in 1806, and the curious may yet read on his mural monument in St. Julian's Church how he was "many years proprietor of the 'Raven' and 'Lion' inns in this town," and that it was to his "public spirit and unremitting exertions for upwards of thirty years, in opening the great road through Wales between the United kingdoms, as also for establishing the first mail-coach, that the public in general have been greatly indebted."

Almost equally forceful were some of the old-time proprietors of the "George" at Walsall. In

1781 Mr. Thomas Fletcher, one of an old and highly respected family in that town, gave up the "Dragon" in High Street and built the great "George Hotel." He even procured an Act of Parliament by which the present road from Walsall to Stafford was made, thereby bringing Walsall out of a by-road into the direct line of traffic. He also caused the Birmingham road to be straightened and widened, and gradually brought coaching and posting through the town. His successors, Fletcher and Sharratt, were equally energetic. In 1823 they remodelled the "George," giving it the classic-columned front that confers a kind of third-cousin relationship to the British Museum, with unappetising and gruesome thoughts of dining on fried mummy and kippered parchments. The columns, which are still very solemnly there—or were, a year ago—came from the Marquis of Donegall's neighbouring seat of Fisherwick Hall, demolished about that time, and the placing of them here was celebrated by an inaugural feast, "the colonnade dinner," presided over by Lord Hatherton, a great patron of the house.

Those wonder-working innkeepers also, in 1831, promoted the Bill by which the present Birmingham road through Perry Bar was made, superseding the old route by Hamstead and Handsworth church.

Unfortunately, those fine old innkeepers, whatever else they were, were not usually cultivators of the art of literary expression, and did not write

their memoirs and reminiscences. Yet they could, had they chosen, have told an interesting tale of men and matters. Consider! They were in the whirl of life, and often knew personages and affairs, not merely by report, but at first hand. What would not the historian of social England give for such reminiscences? They would open the door to much that is now sealed, and would clothe the dry bones of mere facts with romance.

One such innkeeper, Mr. J. Kearsley Fowler, who kept the "White Hart," Aylesbury, in the last few years of its existence, has, however, left us something by which we may see, described at first-hand, the life and surroundings of a first-class old coaching and posting inn between 1812 and those middle years of the '60's, when a few branch-road coaches were yet left, and the Squire and Agriculture were still prosperous.

He tells us, of his own knowledge, that the innkeepers had by far the largest amount of capital invested in the country towns, where, as men generally of superior manners and education, from their constant association with the leading nobility, clergy, and magistracy, they took a prominent position, both socially and politically, the leading houses being the head quarters, respectively, of Whigs and Tories.

The "White Hart" at Aylesbury was generally believed to have dated back to the time of Richard the Second, and in the time of the Wars of the Roses to have been the rendezvous of

the White Rose party, while the “Roebuck” was affected to the Red Rose.

Until 1812 the “White Hart” retained its fine mediaeval, three-gabled frontage, with first floor overhanging the ground-floor, and the second overhanging the first. Elaborately carved barge-boards decorated the gables. In the centre of the front was a great gateway with deeply reeded oaken posts and heavy double doors, which could be closed on occasion; but, in the growing security of the land, had scarce within the memory of man been shut to. Within was a spacious courtyard, partly surrounded by a gallery supported on stout oaken pillars and reached by a staircase. From this gallery, as in most other mediaeval hostellries, the bedrooms and principal sitting-rooms opened. The “Coffee Room” and “Commercial Room” were at either side of the entrance from the street: the “Commercial Room” itself having, before the days of “commercials,” once been called “the Change,” and used, as asserted by local tradition, as the place where the principal business transactions of the town were conducted, over suitable liquor.

On the side opposite was the room called the “Crown,” where the collectors of customs and excise, and other officials periodically attended. In the “Mitre,” an adjoining room, the Chancellor of the Bishop of Lincoln, and the “Apparitor” of the Archdeacon had of old collected, for three hundred years, the dues or fees of the Church. Another room, the “Fountain,” was

perhaps originally a select bar. Running under the entire frontage of the house was the extensive cellarage, necessarily spacious in days when every one drank wine, and many deeply.

At the end of the yard was the great kitchen, and beyond it large gardens and a beautiful, full-sized bowling-green. Gigantic elms, at least three centuries old, bordered the gardens, which were further screened from outside observation by dense shrubberies of flowering shrubs, laburnums, lilacs, mountain-ash, acacias, and red chestnuts. Ancient walnut-trees and shady arbours completed this lovely retreat.

But this was not all. Beyond this very delightful, but merely ornamental, portion was an orchard stocked with fine apple- and pear-trees: codlins, golden and ribston pippins, Blenheim orange, russets and early June-eatings, Gansell's bergamot pear, and others. Three very fine mulberry-trees, at least three centuries old, and of course a varied and extensive stock of bush-fruit, were included in this orchard, and in addition there was the kitchen-garden.

In the orchard were the cow-houses and piggeries, and the hospital for lame or ailing horses. A mill-stream ran at the bottom, and in the midst of it was a "stew," a shallow pond for freshwater fish, in which was kept an "eel-trunk," a strong iron box about four feet long and two feet wide and deep, perforated with holes. The lid of this contrivance was fastened with lock and key, and was under the charge of the man-

cook, who was head of the servants. When eels were required for table, the trunk would be hauled up to bank by a strong iron chain, and emptied.

The stables had stalls for about fifty horses, and over them were lofts for hay, straw, and corn. Harness-rooms, waiting-room for the postboys, and an “ostry,” *i.e.*, office and store-room for the ostler, were attached, together with chaise and coach-houses. The establishment of the “White Hart”—and it was typical of many others in the old days—covered from five to six acres.

The staff of such a house was, of course, large. Besides the innkeeper and his wife, both of them working hard in the conduct of the business, there were housekeeper, barmaid, man-cook, waiter and under-waiter, kitchenmaid, scullerymaid, chambermaid, laundress, housemaid, nurse, boots, ostler, tap-boy, first-turn postboy, and generally an extra woman: sixteen persons, whom the innkeeper had to lodge and feed daily, in addition to his guests.

The “White Hart” was re-fronted in a very plain, not to say ugly, manner in 1813, and finally demolished in 1863. Not even that most lovely and most famous feature of it, the celebrated “Rochester room,” was spared. This was a noble apartment, built as an addition to the back of the house in 1663 by the Earl of Rochester, as a return for a signal service rendered by the landlord in that time—perilous to such Cavaliers as he—the Commonwealth. It seems, according to

Clarendon, that the Earl and Sir Nicholas Armour came riding horseback into the town one night and put up at the “White Hart,” then kept by a landlord named Gilvy, who was affected strongly in favour of Cromwell and all his doings. The local magistrate, hearing of the visit of the Earl, sent secretly to the innkeeper requesting him to detain the travellers’ horses the next morning, so that neither of them should be able to leave, pending an inquiry upon their business; but the thing was not done secretly enough. Probably one of the servants of the inn told those two guests of something ominous being afoot; at any rate, the Earl had Gilvy up and questioned him, and, telling him how probably the lives of himself and friend were in his hand, gave him forty Jacobuses and suggested that they should, without a word, depart that night. Clarendon expresses himself as unable to decide whether the gold or the landlord’s conscience prompted his next action. At any rate, Gilvy conducted the two fugitives from the inn at midnight “into the London way.” They reached London and then fled over sea, while the landlord was left to invent some plausible story to satisfy the Justice of the Peace, who in his turn was suspected by Cromwell of being a party to the escape.

At the Restoration, the landlord received a brimming measure of reward. He was thanked by the King, and the Earl built for him that noble room, forty-two feet long, by twenty-three wide, that was the pride and glory of the “White

Hart" for just two hundred years. It was panelled from floor to ceiling in richly carved oak, set off with gilding, and embellished with the figures of Peace and Concord and the initials C R, while the ceiling was painted with nymphs and cherubim by Antonio Verrio.

Nothing has more changed from its former condition than the old inn which has become the modern hotel. The "George," the "Crown and Anchor," the "Wellington," or the "King's Head," had an individuality which was never lost. There was a personal kind of welcome from the landlord and the landlady that simulated the hospitality of a friendly host and hostess, mingled with the attention of a superior sort of body-servant. You were not handed over to a number and a chambermaid, like a document in a pigeon-hole tabulated by a clerk ; but the hostess herself showed you your rooms, and begged you to put a name to anything you might fancy. There was no general coffee-room then, save for commercial travellers and such social gentlemen as preferred even inferior company to solitude. There was no table d'hôte dinner other than the ordinary, between twelve and two, which was chiefly made for the convenience of travellers by the stage-coach, who halted here for change and refreshment. Even the ladies who might be on the road were served and kept apart from the, perhaps, doubtful gents below ; and mine host himself brought in the first dish and set it on the table of the private room, which was as much *de rigueur* then for ladies

as the copper warming-pan and the claret with the yellow seal, or the thick, deep red luscious port of old, ordered by the knowing for the good of the house.

In the country the pretty little inn, with its honeysuckled porch and scrambling profusion of climbing roses up to the bedroom windows, had an even more home-like character in its methods of dealing with its guests. Here the servants stayed on for years, till they grew to be as much part of the establishment as the four-poster hung with red moreen and the plated sconces for candles. And here everything was of perfect cleanliness, and as fresh as fragrant. The eggs and milk and butter were all sweet and new. Generous jugs of cream softened the tartness of the black-currant pudding or the green-gooseberry tart. The spring chickens and young ducklings had been well fed ; the mutton was home-grown and not under five years ; the beef was home-grown too, and knew nothing of antiseptic preparations or frozen chambers ; and the vegetables came direct from the garden, and had been neither tinned nor carted for miles in huge waggon loads, well rammed down and tightly compressed. And all the meat was roasted before an open fire, diligently basted in the process, till the gravy lightly frothed on the browned skin, and the appetising scent it gave out had no affinity with the smell of fat on heated iron, which for the most part accompanies the modern roast in the modern oven. The linen invariably smelt of lavender or dried rose-leaves,

of which big bags were kept among the sheets ; but the washing apparatus was poor, and the illumination was scanty. Wax candles in silver or plated branched candlesticks, that vaguely suggested churches and sacraments, shed a veritably “dim religious” glimmer in the sitting-room, and appeared expensively under the form of “lights” in the bill—mistily suggestive of food for hungry cats.

Yet the old country inn had, and still has—for it is not wholly extinct—its charms that weigh against any little defect.

Of all this quasi-home life which belonged to the old inn of the past, the hotel of the present has not a trace. For certain forms of luxury the modern hotel is hard to beat. Thick carpets deaden the footsteps of stragglers through the corridors, and your boots, invariably kicked into infinites by midnight guests, do not—as they do in the older houses—fly noisily along the bare boards. The rooms are lighted with electric light, but usually set so high as to be useless for all purposes of reading or working. In the drawing-room are luxurious chairs of all shapes and sizes ; in the reading-room papers of all colours, to suit here the red-hot Radical and there the cooler Conservative. The billiard-room attracts the men after dinner as—if in the country—the tennis-ground or the golf-links had attracted them through the day. The telephone does everything you want. Carriages, theatres, quotations, races, a doctor if you are ill, a motor-car if you are well

—nothing within the range of human wants that can be ordered and not chosen comes amiss to the telephone and its manipulators. All the rough edges of life are smoothed down to satin softness. All the friction is taken away. A modern hotel is as the isle of Calypso or the Garden of Armida, where all you have to do is to make known your wants and pay the bill.

But it has not one single strain of Home in it. Home is the place where the out-of-date lingers, and where modern conveniences that add to the complexity and the worry of life have no corner. At the modern hotel you are a document in a pigeon-hole—a number, not a person—an accident, not substantive. The chambermaid does not wait on you, but on the room. You get up, breakfast, dine, according to the times fixed by the management. You cannot have your bath before a certain hour, and the bacon is not frizzled until nine o'clock. Luncheon is probably elastic because it is cold, and potatoes can be kept hot without difficulty. Dinner is, of course, fixed, and you take it in masses together: or so took it, for in late years, especially in the first hotels of London, a revulsion of feeling has led to the long tables being abolished, and small ones installed, where, almost privately amid the throng, you and your little party may dine. As a rule the waiters are Swiss and the meat is foreign, the cook is a Frenchman and called a *chef*; and the materials are inferior. The vegetables are tinned, and oysters, lobsters, salmon, and hare

in May follow suit. The sauces are all exactly the same in one hotel as in another, and much margarine enters into their composition. Electric bells emphasise the monotonous ordering of the whole concern, where as little character is expressed in the ring as in the number it indicates ; and speaking-tubes sound in the corridors, like domestic fog-horns or railway whistles, calling the chambermaids or waiters of such-and-such a floor to listen to their orders from below. Wherever you go you find exactly the same things—the same order, the same management, the same appliances and methods. You arrive without a welcome, you leave without a farewell. Your character is determined according to the tips you give on parting, and an hour after you have gone your personality is forgotten. But, above all things, Heaven save us from falling ill in the modern hotel. No one cares for you, and no one even has the decency to make a pretence of doing so.

Sometimes, however, if you go somewhat out of the season, and before the rush of visitors begins, you get to a certain degree behind the scenes, and learn a little of the heart and humanity of the management. The chambermaid has time to have a little chat with you in the morning, and the head waiter gives you bits of local information both interesting and new. The manageress is not too busy for a few minutes' gossip across the counter which separates her from the hall, and screens her off in a sanctuary of her own. And you may find her cheerful,

chatty, kindly, and willing to please for the mere pleasure of pleasing.

In the monster hotels of London and the great cities, while there may yet be a "season"—a period of extra pressure and overcrowding—there is no such slack time as the giant caravanserais of holiday resorts experience.

The pioneer of the many-storeyed, "palatial" hotels, gorgeous with marble pavements, polished granite columns, lifts and gigantic saloons, was the "Great Western Railway Hotel" at Paddington.<sup>1</sup> Since that huge pile set the fashion, hundreds of others, huger and more magnificent, have been built at Charing Cross, Euston, St. Pancras, Marylebone and other London termini, with big brothers—in every way as big and well-appointed—in provincial towns. They are the logical outcome of the times, the direct successors of the coaching and posting inns that originally came into existence to supply the wants, in food and lodging, of travellers set down at the places where the coaches stopped. The final expression of the coaching hostelry is still to be seen in London, in instructive company with one of the largest of the railway hotels, in the Strand, where the "Golden Cross," built in 1832, looks upon the

<sup>1</sup> A large hotel was also built outside Slough Station, eighteen miles from Paddington, for weary and hungry travellers. Such were the quaint ideas of the early railway directors, who could not forget the necessities, the usages and customs of the coaching age, when inns at short stages were indispensable. The hotel at Slough was from the first a failure, and the building has long been an orphanage.

“Charing Cross Hotel” of the South-Eastern Railway.

The management of a great modern hotel is no easy thing. It demands the urbanity of an ambassador, the marketing instincts of a good housewife, the soldier’s instinct for command, the caution of a financier, and a gift for judging character. All these things—natural endowments, or the result of training—must go to the making of an hotel-manager who has, perhaps, a couple of hundred people on his staff, and hundreds of guests, many of them unreasonable, to keep satisfied.

It has lately become a commonplace to say that cycling and the motor-car have peopled the roads again. The old coaching inns have entered upon a new era of prosperity by reason of the crowds of cyclists who fare forth from London along the ancient highways, or explore, awheel, the neighbourhoods of provincial towns. The “last” coach-driver, coach-guard, and post-boy, killed off regularly by the newspapers, still survive to witness this new cult of the wheel, and the ultimate ostlers of the coaching era, a bit stiff in the joints, shaky at the knees, and generally out of repair, have come forth blinking, from the dark and cavernous recesses of their mouldering stables, all too large now for the horses that find shelter there, to take charge of the machines of steel and iron and rubber that will carry you infinite distances without fatigue.

There are elements of both fun and pathos in

the sight of an old ostler cleaning a muddy bicycle in a coach-yard from which the last coach-horses departed nearly two generations ago. As a boy, he started life in the place as a stable-help, and had scarce finished his novitiate when the railway was opened and the coaches dropped off one by one, after vainly appealing to the old-fashioned prejudices of their patrons to shun the trains and still travel by the highways. How he has managed to retain his place all this time goodness only knows. Perhaps he has been useful in looking after the horses that work the hotel 'bus to and from the station ; and then the weekly market-day, bringing in the farmers with their gigs and traps from outlying villages, is still an institution. For such customers old George had, no doubt, the liveliest contempt in the fine old free-handed days of coaching ; but this class of business, once turned over cheerfully to second- or third-rate inns, has long been eagerly shared here.

To watch him with a bicycle you would think the machine a sensitive beast, ready to kick unless humoured, for as he rubs it down with a cloth he soothes it with the continuous “ ‘ssh-ssh, ‘ssh’ ” which has become involuntary with him, from long usage ; while if indeed it can’t kick, it succeeds very fairly in barking his shins with those treacherous pedals. All the persuasive hissing in the world won’t soothe a pedal.

As for the motor-cars which are now finding their way into the old inn-yards, the old ostler stands fearfully aloof from them, and lets

the driver of the motor look after the machine himself. The New Ostler, who will be produced by the logic of events in the course of a very few more years, will be an expert mechanic, and able to tittivate a gear and grind in a valve of a motor-car, or execute minor repairs to a bicycle, just as readily as an ostler rubs down or clips a horse.

## CHAPTER VI

### PILGRIMS' INNS AND MONASTIC HOSTELS

INNS, or guest-houses for the proper lodging and entertainment of travellers bent on pilgrimage, were among the earliest forms of hostelries; and those great bournes of religious pilgrimage in mediæval times—the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket at Canterbury, the tomb of Edward the Second in Gloucester Cathedral, the relics of St. Dunstan at Glastonbury, and the more or less holy objects of superstitious reverence at Walsingham, St. Albans, and indeed, in most of our great abbeys, attracting thousands of sinners anxious to clear off old scores and begin afresh—were full of inns for the entertainment of every class of itinerating sinner; from the Abbot's guest-house, at the service of the great, to the hostels for the middle classes, and the barns and outhouses where the common folk appropriately herded.

The Abbots and other dignified ecclesiastics were thus among the earliest innkeepers, but they conducted their business on lines that would be impossible to the modern hotel-keeper, for they commonly boarded and lodged their guests free of charge, confident, in the religious spirit of the time, that the offerings to be made at the shrines,

which were the objects of those old-time painful journeys, would amply repay the costs and charges of their entertaining, and leave a very handsome surplus for the good of the Abbey.

Chaucer's description of pilgrimages made to Canterbury gives us a very good idea of the varied character of the crowds setting forth upon their journey to that most popular of shrines; and we learn from him and from many other contemporary sources that the bearing of these crowds was scarce what we should expect of miserable sinners, not only conscious of their sins, but humbly seeking that spiritual spring-clean—absolution. They were gay and light-hearted, reckless, and exceedingly improper, and rarely failed to deeply scandalise the innkeepers along the roads.

The "Tabard," whence Chaucer's pilgrims set out on that April morning in 1383, has long been a thing of the past. It was in 1307, one hundred and thirty-seven years after Becket's martyrdom, that the Abbot of Hyde, at Winchester, built the first house, which seems to have been in two portions: one a guest-house for the brethren of Hyde and other clergy coming to London to wait upon that mighty political and religious personage, my Lord Bishop of Winchester, whose London palace stood close by, on Bankside; the other a more or less commercially conducted inn. When Chaucer conferred immortality upon the "Tabard," in 1383, the lessee of that hostelry was the "Harry Bailly" of *The Canterbury Tales*,

a real person, and probably an intimate friend whom Chaucer thus delighted to honour.

This was no mere red-nosed and fat-paunched purveyor of sack and other quaint liquors of that time, but one who had been Member of Parliament for Southwark in 1376 and again in 1379,<sup>1</sup> and was a person not only of considerable property, but a dignified and well-mannered man—better-mannered and of cleaner speech, we may suspect, than Chaucer's pilgrims themselves :

A seemly man our hostè was withal  
For to have been a marshal in a hall.  
A largè man was he, with eyen steep,  
A fairer burgess is there none in Chepe;  
Bold of his speech, and wise, and well ytaught;  
And of manhöod lackèd righte nought,  
Eke thereto he was right a merry man.

Such a host, and no less a person, could have sat at supper with his guests, even with such gentles as the Knight and his son, the Squire, and the Lady Abbess; and thus only is he able to take charge of, and to assume leadership over, the party of twenty-nine on the long four days' pilgrimage to Canterbury, and to reprove or praise each and all, according to his mind.

The “Tabard” derived its name from the sleeveless ceremonial heraldic coat, tricked out with gold and colours, worn by heralds. At a comparatively early date, however, the “science of fools,” as heraldry has severely been called, grew

<sup>1</sup> Another landlord of the “Tabard”—William Rutter, represented East Grinstead in Parliament, 1529—1536.

neglected, and “tabards” became little understood by common people. The sign of the house was accordingly changed to the “Talbot” about 1599; but even that has grown mysterious, and only folk with very special knowledge now know what a “talbot” was. In those days the meaning was well understood, and especially at inns, for it was the name of a fierce breed of dog—the old English hound, something between a mastiff and a bull-dog—kept chiefly by packmen to mount guard over their pack-horses and goods.

Both “Tabard” and “Talbot” are now nothing more substantial than memories. Little could have been left of the historic house in 1676, when the great fire of Southwark swept away many of the old inns. A newer “Talbot” then arose on the site, and stood until 1870: itself of so venerable an appearance that it was not difficult to persuade people of its being the veritable house whence Chaucer’s pilgrims set forth those many centuries ago.

The pilgrims only made Dartford the first night, a fifteen-miles’ journey that would by no means satisfy those inclined nowadays to follow their trail. We are not, however, vouchsafed any definite information as to Dartford, and the oldest portions of the existing “Bull” inn there are not, by perhaps two hundred years, old enough to have housed that miscellaneous party. But there was an inn, frequented by pilgrims, at that time upon the same site, and the “Bull” claims to be one of the oldest licensed houses in Kent—

as well it may, for it is known to date back to 1450. In Chaucer's time the landlord was, we are told, one Urban Baldock, himself a friend of the poet, and the source whence a great deal of information respecting pilgrims and their ways was gathered by him for *The Canterbury Tales*.

The oldest part of the "Bull" is the court-yard, galleried after the ancient style, but in these practical and in many ways unsentimental times roofed in with glass and used as a corn-market. Behind the carved wooden balusters of the gallery are the bedrooms, until late years largely given up to dust and cobwebs, but now rebuilt and again in use. Those who care for things that have had their day will think it fortunate that merely alteration, and not destruction, has been suffered here.

For the rest, the "Bull" at Dartford is Georgian, and its long brick front, with nine windows in a row, bears a strong family likeness to that of its namesake at Rochester. The bull himself, in great black effigy, occupies a monumental position among the chimney-pots, whence he looks down, like Nelson in Trafalgar Square, upon busy streets.

There have been happenings at the "Bull" in times much later than those of pilgrimage. On August 17th, 1775, a room off the gallery was the scene of an affray that led to Joseph Staepoole, William Gapper, and James Lagier being indicted for shooting "John Parker, Esq.," described as an Irish gentleman of fortune.

It seems that Joseph Stacpoole had lent John Parker and his brother Francis various sums of money, amounting in all to £3,000, and had very seriously embarrassed himself in doing so. He could not succeed in getting payment, and as he had good reason to suspect that the Parkers intended to abscond over sea, he followed them to Dartford, with his attorney and a bailiff. Hearing that they were staying with some friends at the "Bull," Stacpoole sent Lagier, the bailiff, with a writ into the room they occupied, himself and Gapper following.

No sooner did the hot-headed Parker see the bailiff than he cried out, "Zounds! where are my pistols?" and one of his friends dashed out a candle with his hand and upset the only other. In this dim and dangerous situation the bailiff, mortally afraid for himself, cried out for help, and Stacpoole and Gapper came rushing in. Parker's friends then seized Stacpoole by the collar, and seem to have shaken him so violently that they shook off the contents of a carbine he was carrying, with the result that Parker himself was shot through the body with three bullets. When that happened Parker's brother fled to London, a Mr. Masterson ran downstairs, and a Mr. Bull, who had taken a prominent part in the collaring, was in so great a hurry that he jumped over the gallery into the yard.

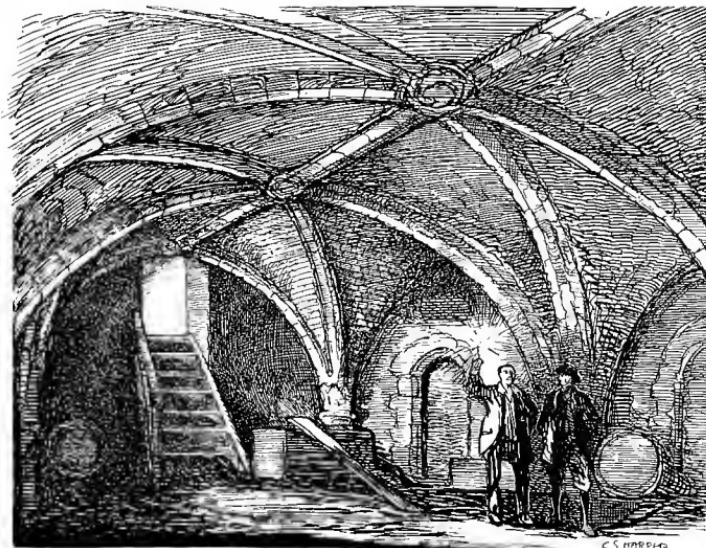
The trial of Stacpoole and his two co-defendants did not take place until March 20th, 1777, when all were acquitted.

The last picturesque incident in the history of the “Bull” took place in 1822, when George the Fourth came posting along the road and the post-boy stopped here to change horses. He had just asked Essenhigh, the landlord, who that “damned pretty woman” was whom he saw at one of the windows, and mine host had only just replied that it was his wife, when a hostile crowd, in sympathy with “the persecuted” Queen Caroline, who had died the year before, began to “boo” and howl at the King. “When gentlemen meet, compliments pass,” says the adage, and one Callaghan, a journeyman currier, thrust forward and roared out, in the face of the “First Gentleman in Europe,” “You are a murderer!” a remark which possesses the recommendation neither of truth nor politeness, and resulted, in this instance, in the outrageous Callaghan being punched on the head and felled to the ground by one of the King’s faction. The King himself drove off in such a hurry that the postboy fell off his horse on leaving the town.

The pilgrims’ hostels that once existed at Rochester are things of the past, but it seems not unlikely that the “George,” in the High Street, almost opposite the Pickwickian “Bull,” was once something in this nature, for although the modern frontage is absolutely uninteresting, not to say distressingly ugly, and although it is now nothing more than a public-house, the very large and very fine Early English crypt, now used as a beer-cellar, shows that a building of semi-eccle-

siastical nature once stood on the site. The "George" is an old sign, the present house being built on the ruins of one destroyed by fire a hundred and twenty years ago.

The crypt, built of chalk, with ribs and bosses of Caen stone, is roofed with four-part vaulting,



CRYPT AT THE "GEORGE," ROCHESTER.

and is in four bays, the whole 54 ft. in length, by nearly 17 ft. wide, and 11 ft. high.

Beside the Dover Road, which is of course the pilgrims' road from London to Canterbury, one mile short of Faversham town, stands the village of Ospringe, identified by some antiquaries as the site of the Roman station of *Durolevum*. Time was when those who made pilgrimage to Canterbury came to Ospringe through a water-splash,

a little stream that flowed across the highway and no one thought worth while bridging. And so it remained, through the coaching age, until modern times. Now it is covered over, and Ospringe is at this day a quite remarkably dusty place.

There remain, built into the "Red Lion" inn beside the way, fragments of a "maison Dieu," or God's House, that stood here so early as the time of Henry the Second: a hostel established for the reception of travellers, and maintained for many years by the Knights Templars and Brethren of the Holy Ghost. Here travellers of all classes found a lavish hospitality awaiting them, and, so sparsely settled was the country in those centuries, that even kings were glad of this rest-house—and of others like it elsewhere. King John, who was for ever spoiling the Church, and bringing upon himself, and the country with him, Papal excommunications major and minor, and yet was always sponging upon abbots and their kind for board and lodging, had what is described as a *camera regis* here, which seems to modern ears to indicate that he practised photography, centuries before the invention of it. The *camera* in this case is, however, only the mediæval chronicler's Latin way of saying that a room was kept for the King's use.

A landed gentleman of the neighbouring Preston-by-Faversham, one Macknade by name, who died in 1407, left, among many other bequests, £1 to the "Domus Dei" of Ospringe, together

with £10 for the repair of the highway between that point and Boughton-under-Blean. In this manner he hoped to be remembered in the prayers of travellers; and to the same end of bidding for Aves and paternosters for the repose of his soul, he bequeathed 20 pence to all prisoners in Kentish gaols, 12 pence to all debtors similarly situated, £23 to the minor religious houses of the county, and a larger sum to the principal abbeys. In addition to these items we find one of 10 cows, left to Preston church, for the purpose of maintaining a lighted taper at the Easter Sepulchre there. Let us hope his solicitude for his soul has not been without its due results.

The “maison Dieu” of Ospringe was disestablished long before the general ruin of such institutions was ordained, in the time of Henry the Eighth. In 1479 we find the place inhabited by two brethren, survivors of the eight who once welcomed and made good cheer for pilgrims; but they forsook it the next year, and in 1480–81 it was, as a derelict religious house, escheated to the Crown.

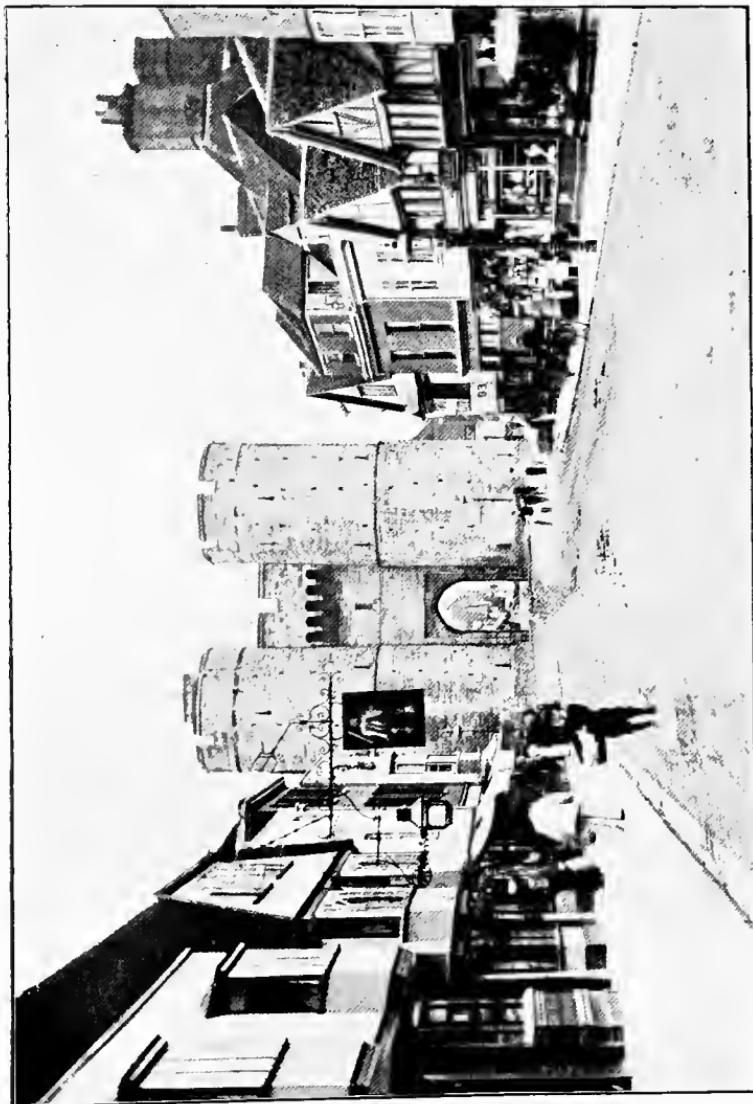
Canterbury itself was, of course, once full of such travellers’ rests. Chief among these was the inn called “The Chequers of the Hope,” at the corner of Mercery Lane, leading to the Cathedral; but, although the lower part of the walls and the mediæval crypt remain, the present aspect of the building is modern and commonplace. It is, in point of fact, a “Ladies’ Outfitting” shop.

Travellers in those centuries seem to have been

in many ways well cared for. The hospitality of the “houses of God” and pilgrims’ halts, however, does but show the bright side of the medal, and implies a very dark reverse.

Good, charitable folks, as we have seen, were rightly sorry for wayfarers, and gave or bequeathed money for lightening the trials and tribulations of their lot. The Church itself regarded the succouring of all such as one of its first duties, and so granted all manner of ghostly privileges to such persons as would build causeways, improve roads, or establish hostels. The bargain seemed in those times a fair one, and induced many to give who would not otherwise have given. To buy absolution for gold, or a few days less purgatory by charitable bequest was good business ; but we may wonder if those who thus purchased remission of sins or an “early door” into Paradise sometimes spared a pitying thought for those poor devils who had not the needful for such indulgences.

Day after day travellers—whose very name comes from “travail” = toil or trouble—journeyed amid dangers, and, when by mischance they were benighted, suffered agonies of apprehension. They intended only to “journey”—to travel by day, as the original sense of that word indicated—and were afflicted with the liveliest apprehensions when night came and found them still on the road. Toiling in the hollow roads, deep in ruts and mud, with terror they saw the sun go down while yet the friendly town was far away, and came at last, in fear and darkness, to the walled



WESTGATE, CANTERBURY, AND THE "FALSTAFF" INN.



city, only to find its gates closed for the night. Every fortified town closed its gates at sunset; else, in those dangerous times, what use your gates and walls? As reasonably might the modern citizen leave his street door wide open all night, as the mediaeval town not close its gates when the hours of darkness were come; and so those travellers and pilgrims who, from much story-telling, praying, or feasting along the road, arrived late at Canterbury, found the portals of Westgate sternly closed against them. Originally they were obliged to lie outside, under the walls or in the fields, instead of being made welcome at the comfortable hostels within, where a man might find jolly company in the rush-strewn hall, and for food and drink be free of the best; but, for the accommodation of such laggards, the suburb of St. Dunstan, without the walls of Canterbury, sprang up at a very early date, and to the custom they thus brought we owe the existence of the "Falstaff" inn, itself containing some fine "linen-pattern" panelling of the time of Henry the Seventh; but not, of course, the original house that, under some other name than the "Falstaff," was early established for the entertainment of late-comers.

The "Falstaff" is a prominent feature of the entrance to Canterbury, and forms, with the stern drum towers of Westgate, built about 1380, as fine an entrance to a city as anything to be found in England. The present sign of the house derives from the instant and extraordinary popularity that

Shakespeare's Fat Knight obtained, from his first appearance upon the Elizabethan stage. The present "Falstaff" is a very spirited rendering, showing the Fat Knight with sword and buckler and an air of determination, apparently "just about to begin" on those numerous "men in buckram" conjured up by his ready imagination on Gad's Hill.



SIGN OF THE "FALSTAFF," CANTERBURY.

"Jingo"—well, you know the rest of it.

Not only pilgrims and travellers from London to Canterbury were thus looked after, but those also coming the other way, and thus we find a Maison Dieu established at Dover in the reign of King John by that great man, Hubert de Burgh, Chief Justiciary of England. A master and a staff of brethren and sisters were placed there to

attend upon the poor priests and the pilgrims and strangers of both sexes, who applied for food and lodging. Kings cannot be classed in any of these categories ; but they also are found not infrequently making use of the institution, on their way to or from France—and departing without a “thank ye.” The only one who seems to have benefited the *Maison Dieu* very much was Henry the Third, who endowed it with the tithe of the passage fare and £10 a year from the port dues.

It is scarce necessary to say who it was that disestablished the *Maison Dieu*. The heavy hand of Henry the Eighth squelched it, in common with hundreds of other religious and semi-religious institutions. At the time of its suppression the annual income was £231 16s. 7d., representing some £2,500 in our day. The master, John Thompson, who had only been appointed the year before, was an exceptionally fortunate man, being granted a pension of £53 6s. 8d. a year. The buildings were then converted into a victualling office for the Navy.

At last, in 1831, the Corporation of Dover purchased them, and the ancient refectory then became the Town Hall and the sacristy the Sessions House, and so remained until 1883, when a new Town Hall was built.

Similar institutions existed at others of the chief ports. At Portsmouth was the Hospital of St. Nicholas, or “God’s House,” founded in the reign of Henry the Third by Peter de Rupibus, Bishop of Winchester. It is now the Garrison

Church. At Southampton the “*Domus Dei*” was dedicated to St. Julian, patron of travellers, and now, as St. Julian’s Hospital and Church, is in part an almshouse, sheltering eight poor persons, and partly a French Huguenot place of worship.

The Pilgrims’ Way to Canterbury from Southampton and Winchester was never a road for wheeled traffic, and remained in all those centuries when pilgrimage was popular, as a track for pedestrians, along the hillsides. It avoided all towns, and thus precisely what those pilgrims who wearifully hoofed it all the way did for shelter remains a little obscure: although it seems probable that wayside shelters, with or without oratories attached to them, were established at intervals. Such, traditionally, was the origin of the picturesque timbered house at Compton, now locally known as “Noah’s Ark.”

Colchester was a place of import to pilgrims in old wayfaring times, for it lay along the line of the pilgrims’ trail to Walsingham. Among the inns of this town, and older than any of its fellows, but coyly hiding its antiquarian virtues of chamfered oaken beams and quaint galleries from sight, behind modern alterations, is the “*Angel*” in West Stockwell Street, whose origin as a pilgrims’ inn is vouched for. Weary suppliants, on the way to, or returning from, the road of Our Lady of Walsingham, far away on the road through and past Norwich, housed here, and misbehaved themselves in their mediaeval way. It would, as already hinted, be the gravest

mistake to assume pilgrims to have been, *qua* pilgrims, necessarily decorous ; and, indeed, modern Bank Holiday folks, compared with them, would shine as true examples of monkish austerity.



HOUSE FORMERLY A PILGRIMS' HOSTEL, COMPTON.

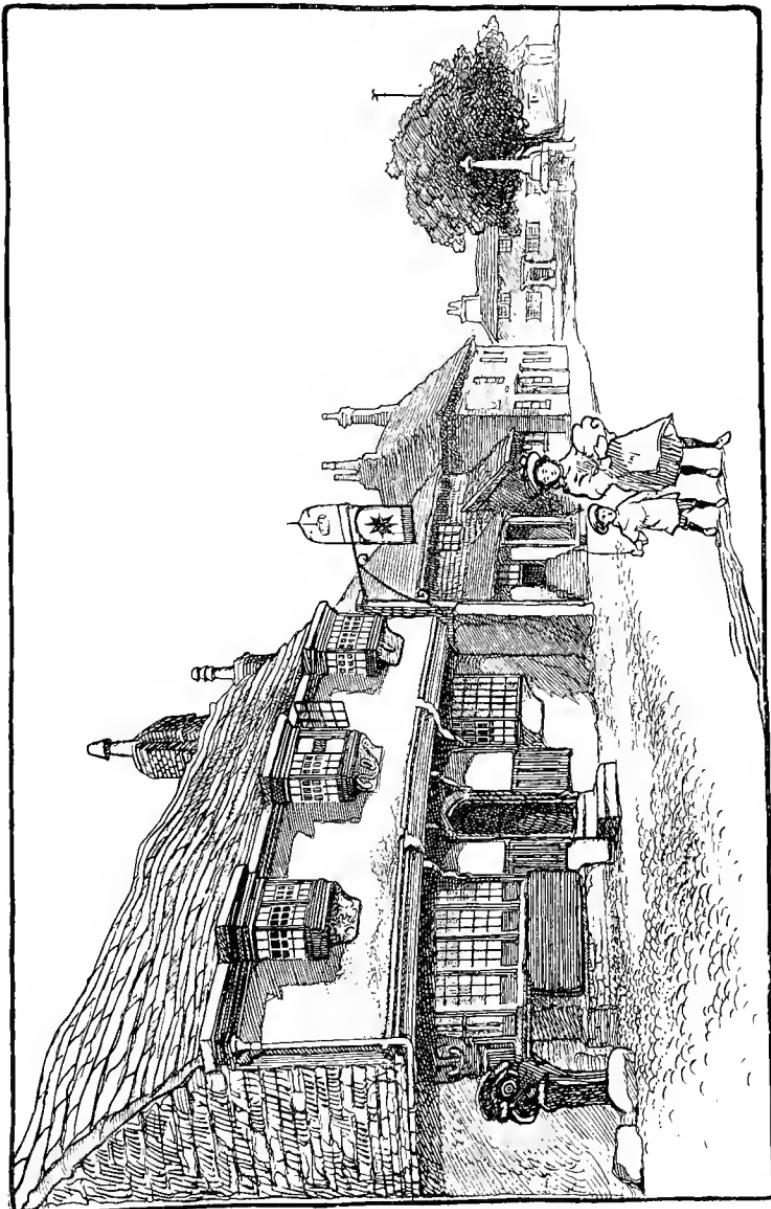
The shrine at Walsingham, very highly esteemed in East Anglia, drew crowds from every class, from king to beggar. The great Benedictine Abbey of St. John of Colchester sheltered some of the greatest of them, while others inned at such hostellries as the "Angel," and the vulgar, or

the merely impecunious, if the weather were propitious, lay in the woods.

Pilgrims would boggle at nothing, as was well known at the time. That they could not be trusted is evident enough in the custom of horse-masters, who let out horses on hire to such travellers, at the rate of twelvepence from Southwark to Rochester, and a further twelvepence from Rochester to Canterbury. They knew, those early keepers of livery-stables, that little chance existed of ever seeing their horses again unless they took sufficient precautions. They therefore branded their animals in a prominent and unmistakeable way, so that all should know such, found in strange parts of the country, to be stolen.

Ill fared the unsuspecting burgess who met any of these sinners on the way to plenary indulgence, for they would, not unlikely, murder him for the sake of anything valuable he carried ; or, out of high spirits and the sheer fun of the thing, cudgel him into a jelly ; arguing, doubtless, that as they were presently to turn over a new leaf, it mattered little how soiled was the old one. Drunkenness and crime, immorality, obscenity, and licence of the grossest kind were, in fact, the inevitable accompaniments of pilgrimage.

Although East Anglia was in the old days more plentifully supplied with great monastic houses than any other district in England, the destruction wrought in later centuries has left all that part singularly poor in the architectural remains of them ; and even the once-necessary

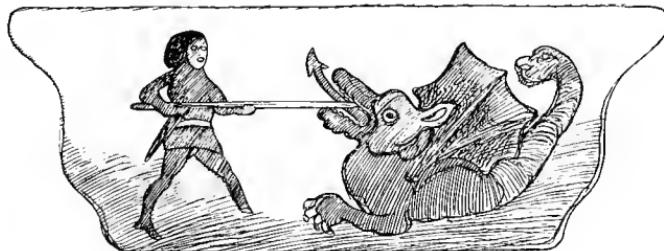


THE "STAR," ALFRISTON.



guest-houses and hostels have shared the common fate. That charming miniature little house, the "Green Dragon" at Wymondham, in Norfolk, may, however, as tradition asserts, have once been a pilgrims' inn dependent upon the great Benedictine Abbey, whose gaunt towers, now a portion of the parish church, rise behind its peaked roofs.

The beautiful little Sussex village of Alfriston—whose name, by the way, in the local shibboleth, is "Arlston"—a rustic gem not so well known as



CARVING AT THE "STAR," ALFRISTON.

it deserves, possesses a very fine pilgrims' inn, the "Star," a relic of old days when the bones of St. Richard of Chichester led many a foot-sore penitent across the downs to Chichester, in quest of a clean spiritual bill of health. Finely carved woodwork is a distinguishing feature of this inn, whose roof, too, has character of its own, in the heavy slabs of stone that do duty for slates, and bear witness to the exceptional strength of the roof-tree that has sustained them all these centuries. The demoniac-looking figure seen on the left-hand of the illustration is not, as might perhaps at first

sight be supposed, a mediaeval effigy of Old Nick, or an imported South Sea Islander's god, but the figure-head of some forgotten ship of the seventeenth century, wrecked on the neighbouring coast, off Cuckmere Haven. Ancient carvings still ornament the wood-work of the three upper



THE "GREEN DRAGON," WYMONDHAM.

projecting windows, the one particularly noticeable specimen being a variant of the George and Dragon legend, where the saint, with a mouth like a potato, no nose to speak of, and a chignon, is seen unexpectedly on foot, thrusting his lance into the mouth of the dragon, who appears to be receiving it with every mark of enjoyment, which

the additional face he is furnished with, in his tail, does not seem to share. The left foot of the saint has been chipped off. All the exterior wood-work has been very highly varnished and painted in glaring colours, from the groups under the windows to the green monkey and green bear



THE PILGRIMS' HOSTEL, BATTLE.

contending on the angle-post for the possession of a green trident.

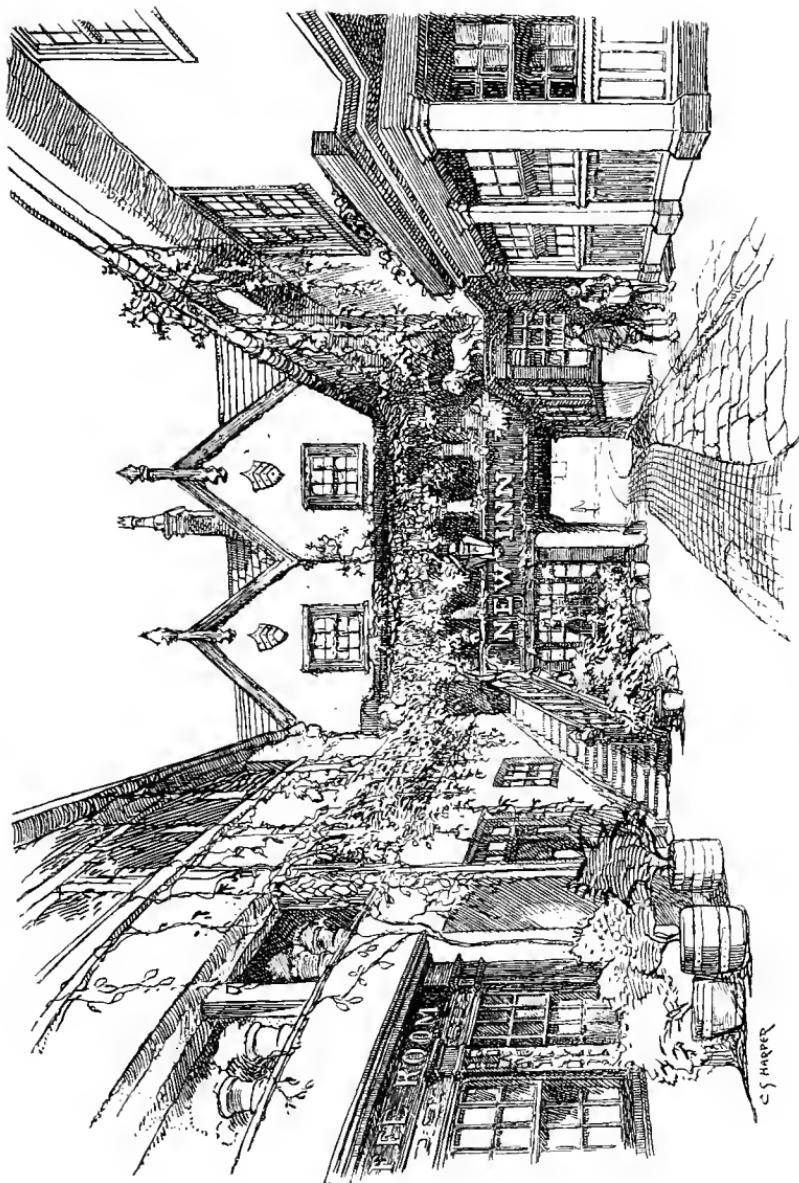
The old pilgrims' hospice of Battle Abbey still remains outside the great gateway, and now offers refreshments to those modern pilgrims who flock in thousands, by chars-à-banc, on cycles, or afoot, to Battle in search of the picturesque; or merely, in many cases, to complete the conventional round of sight-seeing prescribed for visitors to Hastings.

It is a typically Sussexian building of domestic appearance, framed in stout oak timbering, and filled with plaster and rubble, and was probably built early in the fifteenth century.

The so-called "New" Inn, at Gloucester, when actually new, the matter of four hundred and fifty years ago, was erected especially for the accommodation of pilgrims flocking to the tomb of the murdered King Edward the Second, who, by no means a saintly character in life, was in death raised by popular sentiment to the status of something very like a holy martyr. He had been weak and vicious, but those who on September 21st, 1327, put him to a dreadful death in the dungeons of Berkeley Castle acted on behalf of others worse than he, and the horror and the injustice of it had the not unnatural effect of almost canonising the slain monarch.

The Abbot of St. Peter's at Gloucester, John Thokey, when all others, fearing the vengeance of the murderers, dared not give the King's body burial, begged it and buried it, with much reverence, within the Abbey walls. His Abbey, now the Cathedral of Gloucester, reaped unexpected benefits from the humane instincts of that good and pitiful man, for "miracles" were wrought at the "martyr's" tomb, and abundant thank-offerings continued to flow in, and at last enabled the great Abbey to be rebuilt.

It became eventually a pressing need to provide housing outside the Abbot's lodgings for the stream of pilgrims, and accordingly the New



THE "NEW INN," GLOUCESTER.



Inn was built in the middle of the fifteenth century (1450—1457) by John Twynning, a monk of that establishment, of whom we know little or nothing else than that he was, according to the records of his time, a “laudable man.” It remained until quite recent years the property of the Dean and Chapter of Gloucester.

The inn is reached through an archway in Northgate Street, and is arranged, as usual in mediæval inns, around a courtyard. Still the old gables look down upon the yard and, as of yore, the ancient galleries, rescued from the decay and neglect of some seventy years ago, run partly around first and second floors. Existing side by side with those antique features, the quaint windowed bar of the coaching era is now itself a curiosity. In short, mediæval picturesqueness, Jacobean carved oak, commercial and coffee-rooms of the coaching age, and modern comforts conjoin at the New Inn, so that neither a wayworn pilgrim, were such an one likely to appear, nor a seventeenth century horseman, nor even a Georgian coachman, redolent of the rum-punch that was the favourite drink in coaching days, would seem out of place.

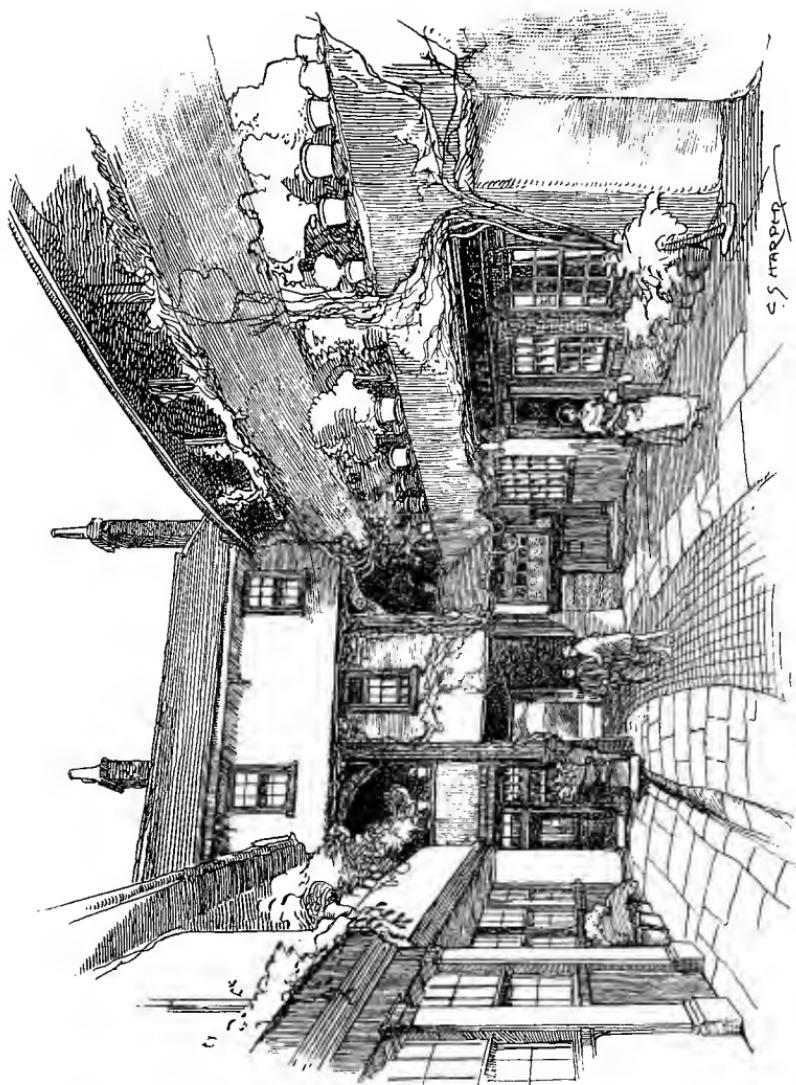
Summer and autumn transfigure the courtyard into the likeness of a rustic bower, for it is plentifully hung with virginia-creepers, from amidst whose leaves the plaster lion who mounts guard on the roof of the bar looks as though he were gazing forth from his native jungle.

I do not know in what way John Twynning—

or Twining, as we should no doubt in modern times call him—was to be reckoned laudable, but if he were thought praiseworthy for anything outside his religious duties it was probably by reason of the skill with which he built this pilgrims' hostel. You perceive little of his work from the street, for at that extraordinary period when stucco was fashionable and plaster all the rage, the timbered front of the building was covered up in that manner, and so remains. But the great building is still constructionally the house that fifteenth-century monk left, and how well and truly he built it, let its sound and stable condition, after four centuries and a half of constant use, tell.

Such modern touches as there are about this quaintly named "New" inn are the merest light clothing upon its ancient body, and the sitting-rooms and forty or so bedrooms, cosy and comfortable to us moderns, are but modern in their carpets and fittings, and in the paper that decorates their walls, in between the stout dark timber framing.

The house is built chiefly of chestnut, traditionally obtained from Highnam, some three miles from the city; and everywhere the enormous beams, in some places polished, in others rough, are to be seen. In their roughest, most timeworn condition, they overhang the narrow passage now called New Inn (formerly Pilgrims') Lane, where, at the angle, a most ornately carved corner-post, very much injured, exhibits a mutilated angel holding



COURTYARD, "NEW INN," GLOUCESTER.



a scroll, in the midst of fifteenth-century tabernacle-work.

As usual in these ancient inns with courtyards and galleries, plays and interludes were formerly acted here, and it is said that the accession of Queen Elizabeth was proclaimed on these flagstones.

That galleries open to the air, with the bedrooms and others giving upon them, were not so inconvenient as generally nowadays supposed is evident enough here, where they are still in use, as they were centuries ago. The only difference is that they are carpeted nowadays, instead of being bare floors.

A staircase from the courtyard leads up to the first-floor gallery, still screened off by the old open-lattice gates reaching from floor to ceiling, originally intended to prevent stray dogs entering.

Portions of the "New Inn" let off in the days of its declining prosperity have in modern times been taken back again: among them the large dining-hall overlooking the lane, for many years used as a Sunday school for the children of St. Nicholas parish, and other rooms looking upon Northgate Street.

In short, the old "New" inn impresses the beholder with a very insistent sense of being a live institution, a "going concern." Most ancient inns of this character are merely poor survivals; archaeologically interesting, but wan veterans tottering to decay and long deserted by custom. Here, however, there is heavy traffic

down in the yard: the ostler is busy in his “Ostry” (the name is painted over the door), bells are ringing, people and luggage coming and going; the big railway parcel-office is as full of parcels as it could have been when it was a coach-office; appetising scents come from glowing kitchens, and to and from private rooms are carried trays of as good things as ever pilgrims feasted upon, at the end of their pilgrimage.

There existed, until about 1859, another very notable “New” inn, probably the work of the Abbots of Sherborne, and intended for the reception of visitors to that beautiful Dorsetshire abbey. That splendid old hostelry, with a noble front of yellow sandstone, built in the Perpendicular style of architecture, probably about 1420, was the finest example of an inn of its period in England, but it was ruthlessly, and with incredible stupidity, demolished, and the only pictorial record of it appears to be an entirely inadequate, severe, and unsympathetic little wood-cut in Parker’s *Domestic Architecture*.<sup>1</sup> It figures in Mr. Thomas Hardy’s story of *The Woodlanders* as the “Earl of Wessex” inn at “Sherton Abbas.”

It was in those “good old days” that are so interesting to read about, and were so ill to live in, that the ancient hospice flourished most bravely. When ways were not merely rough and lonely, but were also infested by “sturdy beggaris,” “mysterless men,” and others who would not hesitate to do the solitary traveller a hurt, the

<sup>1</sup> Vol. II., p. 348.

good abbots or monks who established wayside houses of entertainment where no secular inn-keeper dared were truly benefactors to their species. The relic of just such a place, on a road once extremely lonely and dangerous, is to be found along the present highway between Brecon and Llandovery, in South Wales, some two miles westward of the town of Brecon. The road runs terraced above the southern bank of the river Usk, through a rugged country where, in ancient times, Welsh chieftains and outlaws, alike lawless and beggarly, knocked the solitary traveller on the head and went over his pockets amid the appropriately dramatic scenery of beetling crag and splashing waterfall. At the gate of this lurking of bandits the holy monks of Malvern Priory founded an hospitium, on the spot where stand to-day the ancient and picturesque church and the few houses of the village of Llanspyddid: whose Welsh name, indeed, means the Hospice Church.

Nothing, unfortunately, is left of that "spythy," or hospice, they so piously built and maintained, for, its usefulness long overpast, it was left to decay: but the church they built, in which travellers returned thanks for the succour vouchsafed them, remains by the roadside. It is a romantic-looking church, placed in an appropriate setting of extremely ancient and funereal-looking yews that lead up darkly to the heavy north porch, beautifully decorated with carved woodwork.

The "George" at Glastonbury presents the finest exterior of all these pilgrims' inns, for it

stands to-day very much as it did in the time of Edward the Sixth, when it was built (1475) by Abbot John Selwood for the accommodation of such pilgrims as were not personages. There has ever been a subtle distinction between a personage and a mere person. The great ones, the high and mighty of the land, on pilgrimage were made much of, and entertained by my lord Abbot in appropriately princely fashion, in the Abbot's lodgings: the middle-class pilgrims were lodged at the Abbot's inn, and the residue lay where best they might: perhaps in some guesten-hall, or possibly in the open air.

Pilgrimages to Glastonbury were less numerous and popular than those to the pre-eminent Shrine of the Blessed St. Thomas at Canterbury, but they were not few, for the story of this great mitred Somersetshire Abbey is one of the marvels and legendary wonders that, however greatly they may stagger the twentieth-century capacity for belief, were of old implicitly relied upon. Few were those who in mediæval times questioned their genuineness, and those who did so kept their doubts prudently to themselves.

This marvellous lore narrates how it was to St. Joseph of Arimathea that the Abbey owed its origin. In A.D. 63 he came, with eleven companions, wandering among the bogs and morasses of this western land, and discovered this elevated ground rising above the marshes, further topped by the commanding peak of Glastonbury Tor. "Weary all!" they exclaimed, as they sank



THE "GEORGE," GLASTONBURY.



down, exhausted, on the spot called Weary All Hill to this day, although its name is properly “Wirral.” Here St. Joseph thrust his staff into the ground, and, taking root and blossoming every Christmas Day for over fourteen hundred years, it was known in all Christendom as the Holy Thorn.

The Holy Thorn itself was a sight to see, for, whatever its origin, it did actually blossom on or about Christmas, as descendants from the parent stock do to this day. The original hawthorn—or what was looked upon in the time of Queen Elizabeth as the original—was fanatically attacked by an early Puritan who succeeded in felling one of its two trunks, and was proceeding to destroy the other, when he struck his leg instead, and had an eye gouged out by a flying chip: an incident that would have pleased the old monks, had they not been dead and gone a generation earlier. This capacity in the Holy Thorn for taking its own part did not avail when a Cromwellian soldier-saint, a half-century or so later, cut it down. Nothing in the tragical way appears to have happened to him.

An object of even greater veneration than the Holy Thorn was the body of St. Dunstan, stolen by the monks of Glastonbury from Canterbury, and for long centuries a source of great revenue, in the shape of offerings from the faithful, eager for his spiritual good offices or for the healing touch of his relics.

That which was too staggering for the belief

of old-time pilgrims was never discovered. At Glastonbury they were shown a part of Moses' rod, some milk and some hair of the Virgin, part of the hem of the Saviour's garment, a nail from the Cross, and a thorn from the Crown of Thorns. No one ever questioned those blasphemous mediæval Barnums, who showed a sample of the manna that fed the children of Israel, and the incredible item of "the dust of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, the three children sacrificed in the burning fiery furnace, with the bone of one of them"; and so they humbugged the devout for centuries.

Pilgrims of all kinds, bringing offerings, each one according to his means, were clearly to be encouraged, and there was from a very early period an "Abbot's Inn" at Glastonbury. This stood on the site of the present "White Hart" until about 1755, when, to prevent it falling, it was pulled down. It had, however, ceased to be the Abbot's Inn about 1489, the newly built "George" then taking its place. How dilapidated was the more ancient building may be understood from the story which tells of an auction being held on an upper floor, just before its demolition. "Going, going!" exclaimed the auctioneer, and then, as he accepted a bid, "Gone!": whereupon the entire flooring of the room gave way, and every one and everything were, with a tremendous crash, precipitated down to the ground floor.

Abbot Selwood, who ruled from 1456 to 1493, built the "George" for middle-class pilgrims,

and gave them board and lodging free for two days. He did so from a strictly business point of view ; and we may even suspect that, if his guests made a longer stay, he recompensed himself by overcharging.

Although a room is shown in which King Henry the Eighth is said to have slept—heavens ! did they treat *him* as a middle-class pilgrim ?—and a room with oaken beams is termed the “Abbot’s Room,” there is little to be seen within, save the original stone newel staircase leading upstairs and a stone bench in the cellar now christened the Penitents’ Seat, on which, if you please, sinners under conviction sat, with water up to their knees. For my part, although the perennial spring is there, I remain sceptical of aught but beer-barrels and hogsheads of wine ever having occupied that Penitents’ Form. Penitents frequenting the cellars where the booze is kept are suspect.

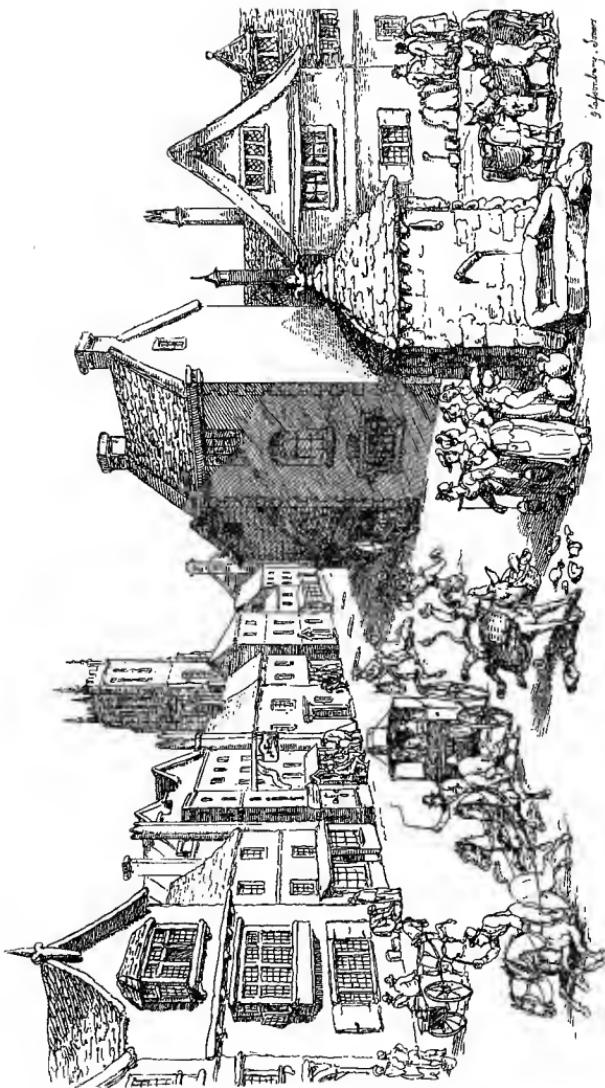
The exterior, however, is a very fine example of the late Perpendicular phase of Gothic architecture, as applied to domestic or semi-domestic uses. The battlements formerly had stone figures peering from each embrasure, figures traditionally said to have represented the Twelve Cæsars, or the Twelve Apostles. Exactly *how* this was managed can hardly be seen, for there are but seven openings. Only one figure now remains, and he looks little like a Cæsar, and very much less like an Apostle.

At the present time the “George” is a  
VOL. I. 8

“family and commercial” hotel. Its notepaper would seem to indicate that it is not the house for Dissenters, for it displays, beneath a mitre and crossed croziers, an aspiration in Latin to the effect that “May the Anglican Church Flourish.” Our withers are wrung: we are galled, and wince.

The “Red Lion,” opposite the “George,” with fine stone-embayed window and frontage dated 1659, was formerly the Porter’s Lodge and gateway of the Abbey.

A very spirited view of Glastonbury, including the “George,” in the eighteenth century was executed, as an etching, by Rowlandson, and shows us, in his inimitable manner, the life and bustle of an old English country town on market-day. There you see a post-chaise and four being driven at top speed through the town, bringing disaster to a woman dealer in crockery, whose donkey, lashing out with his hind-legs, is upsetting the contents of his panniers; and there at the town-pump, in those days before house-to-house water-supply, are the gossiping servants, very beefy about the ankles, filling their pitchers and pipkins.



HIGH STREET, GLASTONBURY, IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.  
*From the etching by Roslandson.*



## CHAPTER VII

### PILGRIMS' INNS AND MONASTIC HOSTELS (continued)

AT St. Albans we have still something in the way of a pilgrim's inn. St. Albans was, of course, the home of the wonder-working shrine of St. Alban, the proto-martyr of Britain, and by direct consequence a place of great pilgrimage and a town of many inns. Here is the "George," one of the pleasantest of the old inns remaining in the place, with an old, but scarce picturesque frontage, relieved from lack of interest by a quaint sundial, inscribed *Horas non numero nisi serenas*, and a more than usually picturesque courtyard.

The house is mentioned so early as 1448 as the "George upon the Hupe." In those times it possessed an oratory of its own, referred to in an ancient licence, by which the Abbot authorised the innkeeper to have Low Mass celebrated on the premises, for the benefit of "such great men and nobles, and others, as shall be lodged here."

Let us try to imagine that inn, licensed for the sale of wine and spirituous liquors and for religious services! It seems odd, but after all not so odd as these mad times of our own, when public-houses are converted into missions, and ordained

clergymen of the Church of England become publicans and serve drinks across the counter in the interest of temperance and good behaviour.<sup>1</sup>

No traces of that oratory now remain in the “George.” It is one of the most comfortable of old houses, and full of old panelling and old prints and furniture, but the “great men and nobles” have long ceased to lodge here, and it is now only frequented by “others.” The chapel was desecrated at the time of the Reformation, and was afterwards in use as part of the stables.

The carving seen in the illustration over the archway is no integral part of the inn, but was brought from old Holywell House in 1837, on the destruction of that mansion, of which it formed the decorative pediment.

The Church, as already shown, was the earliest innkeeper in those days when travellers travailed in difficulties and dangers; and semi-religious bodies often acted the same hospitable part. The Knights Templars and the Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem kept hostellries at various places, prominent among them the old house which is now the “Angel” at Grantham.

“The “Angel,” in common with other inns of the same name, derived its sign in the far-off thirteenth century from a religious picture-sign of the Annunciation, and we may readily see how, in the fading of the picture, the rest of the group

<sup>1</sup> For example, the Rev. Dr. Thackeray, late Chaplain of the Hackney Union, licensee and active publican of the “Fish and Eels” at Roydon.

gradually sank out of sight, leaving only that bright announcing messenger visible to passers-by. Undoubtedly the "Angel" at Islington obtained



THE "GEORGE," ST. ALBANS.

its name in this way: staggering though the thought may be to those who know that merely secular public-house, in that roaring vortex of London traffic.

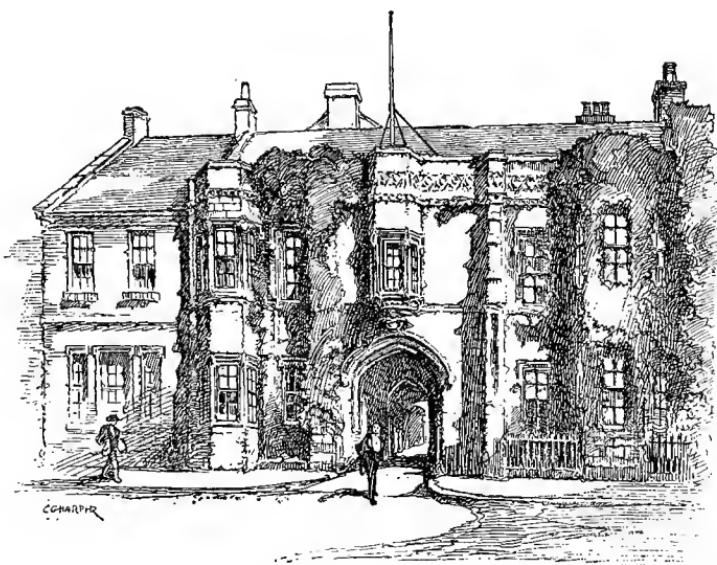
The attitude of greeting in the pose of the

angelie figure led in course of time to such a sign being often called the “Salutation” : hence the various old inns of that name in different parts of the country were originally “Angels.”

The “Angel” at Grantham is a quaint admixture of ancient and modern. It was a hostel, and bore this name even so early as the reign of King John, for beneath its roof that monarch held his Court in the February of 1213. We do not, however, find anything nowadays so ancient in the “Angel,” for every vestige of the building in which that shifty and evasive monarch lodged has disappeared. This is by no means to say that the “Angel” is of recent date. It belongs in part to the mid-fourteenth and fifteenth eenturies—a more than respectable age. From the midst of the town of Grantham it looks out upon the Great North Road, and in truth, facing a highway of so great and varied historie doings, no building can have witnessed more in the way of varied processions. History, made visible, has passed by, in front of these windows, for at least five hundred years, beginning with the gorgeous cavaleades of kings and courts and armies going or coming on missions of peace or war to and from Scotland, and at last—what a contrast!—ending with the hotel omnibus to or from the railway-station, with the luggage of “eommercials.”

A very tragieal incident in history was enacted in the great room, now divided into three, that once extended the whole length of the frontage on the first floor. Perhaps it was in the bay of the

beautiful Gothic oriel window lighting this room that Richard the Third signed the death-warrant of the Duke of Buckingham, October 19th, 1483. That it was signed in this room we know. What was his manner when he put his hand to that deed ? Did he declaim anything in the “ off with his



THE “ANGEL,” GRANTHAM.

head ; so much for Buckingham,” dramatic way, as we are led by Colley Cibber’s stage-version of Shakespeare’s *Richard the Third* to suppose he did ? Or did he silently treat it as a matter of stern, imperious necessity of statecraft ? Had he possessed the dramatic sense, he certainly would have mouthed some such bloodthirsty phrase, and, turning on his heel in the self-satisfied attitude

of triumphant villainy we know so well, would have made a striking exit, as per stage directions, curling a villainous and contemptuous lip, in the manner that never yet failed to bring down the heartfelt hatred, and the hisses, of the gallery.

It is, however, to be sadly supposed that the King did nothing of that sort. He could not play to the gallery—for it was not there ; he probably did not turn upon his heel, nor curl his lip, for the Stage, whence you learn the trick of these things, had not yet come into existence. And if you do but consider it, most of the great doings of the world, bloody or legislative, or what not, have been done—not, if it please you, “enacted”—without a due sense of their dramatic and spectacular possibilities. They all came in the day’s work, and the issues were too tremendous, the risks too great and impending, for the personages involved in them to enjoy the leisure for posing.

The old embayed stone frontage of the “Angel” has survived many a shock and buffet of Time, and, although the mullions of most of its windows have long since been removed, in the not unnatural demand for more light, the antiquity of the house is manifest to the most commercial, and least antiquarian, traveller. On either side of the Gothic archway by which you enter, the carved heads of Edward the Third and his heroic Queen Philippa still appear, and at the crown of the arch, serving the purpose of a supporting corbel to the beautiful oriel window above, is a sculptured angel supporting a shield of arms.

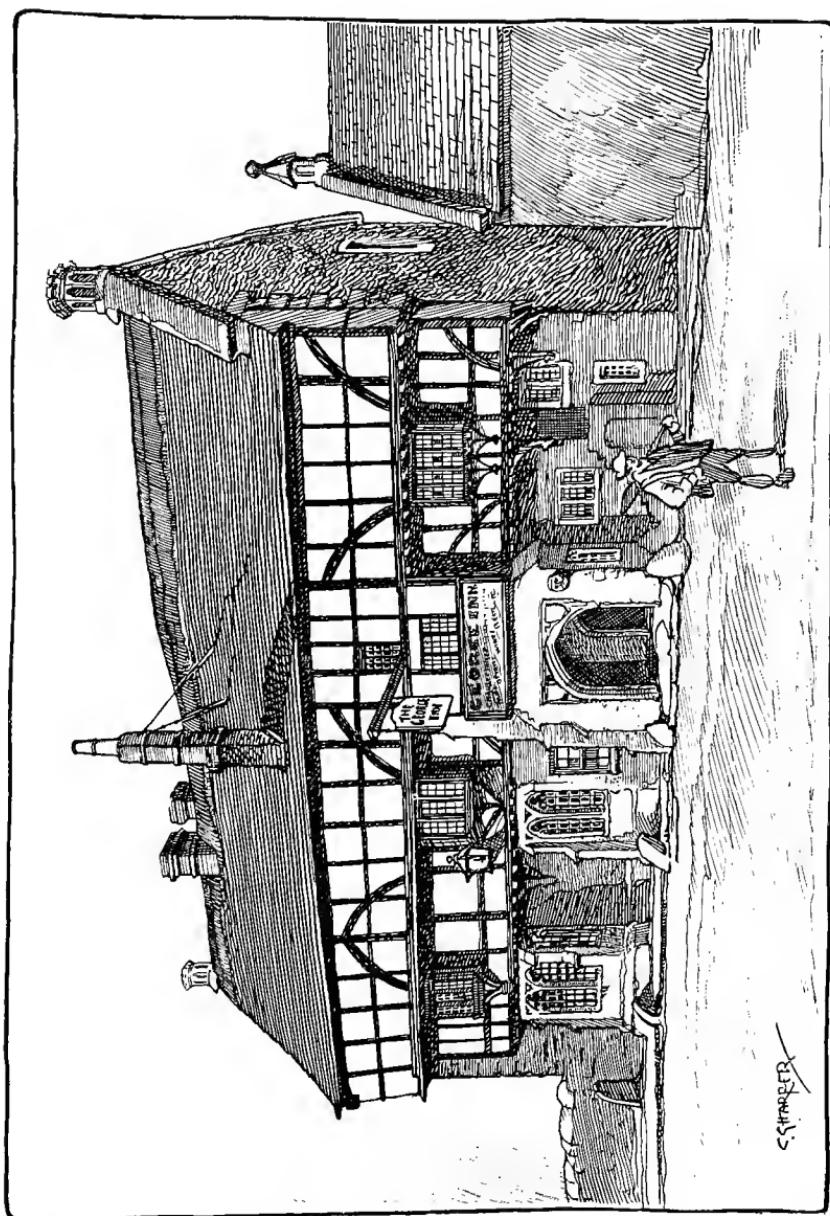
The historic “Angel,” scene of so many centuries of conviviality, has long been made to foster the cause of temperance. Indeed, for two hundred years past, ages before Temperance became a Cause with capital letters and capital endowments, the rent of the house went towards this object, under the will of one Michael Solomon, who, dying in 1706, directed that a sermon should be annually preached in Grantham church, “strongly denouncing drunkenness,” the cost to be met out of the rental of the “Angel.” But the most cynical stroke of chance befell in November, 1905, when the preacher of this counterblast against drink, paid for out of the profits of a licensed house, was the Reverend Gerald Goodwin, son of the chief proprietor of a prominent Newark brewery.

The “George,” at Norton St. Philip, claiming to have been licensed in 1397, has stirring history, as well as antiquity and beauty, to recommend it. You who are curious as to where the village of Norton stands may take the map of Somerset and presently, scanning the county to the south of Bath, discover it set down about seven miles to the south of that ancient city, in a somewhat sequestered district. The reason of so large and so grand a hostelry being in existence since the Middle Ages in so small a village is not, at the first blush, evident, and it is only when the ancient history of Norton itself is explored that the wherefore of it is found.

It seems, then, that the land hereabout was in

those far-off times the property of the old Priory of Hinton Charterhouse—that old Carthusian house whose brethren were the best farmers, wool-growers, and stock-raisers of their time in the West Country. As early as the reign of Henry the Third the monastery was licensed to hold a fair here in May, on the vigil, the feast, and the morrow of the festival of SS. Philip and James ; and again, in 1284, secured a charter conferring the right of holding a market at “Norton Charterhouse” every Friday, instead of, as formerly, at the bleak and much-exposed Hinton. In 1345 the Priory was further empowered to annually hold a fair on the feast of the Decollation of St. John at Norton : an institution that, although the Priory went the way of all its kind over five hundred and fifty years ago, remained a yearly fixture on August 28th and 29th until quite recent times. It was known locally, for some reason now undiscoverable, as “Norton Dog Fair.”

The fair in its last years degenerated into the usual thing we understand nowadays as a fair : a squalid exhibition of Fat Women and Two-headed Calves ; a gaudy and strepitous saturnalia of roundabouts and mountebanks ; but it was—or they were, for, as we have already seen, there were at one time two—originally highly important business conventions. The principal business then transacted was the selling of wool and cloth, and it was for the purpose of helping their trade as wool-growers, and for the benefit generally of their very lucrative fairs, that the monks of



THE "GEORGE," NORTON ST. PHILIP.



Hinton Charterhouse in the fourteenth century built as a hostel that which is to-day the "George" inn.

For generations the merchants and wool-staplers exposed their wares and did their business in the street, or in a large upper room of the house, and long continued to do so when in course of time the whole thing had been altogether secularised.

The cyclist who comes to Norton St. Philip from Bath has a weary time of it, among the hills, by Odd Down, Midford, and Freshford; and only when he has come uphill to windy Hinton Charterhouse are his toils over, and the rest of the way easy. It is a broad, modern road, but the observant may yet see the disused Abbot's Way going, narrow, and even more steep, over the fields, to the left hand; and we may well imagine the joy of the old travellers along it when they saw the grey church tower in the village, nestling in a fold of the hills, and heard those sweet-toned bells of Norton that still sound so mellow on the ear, and are the identical "very fine ring of six bells" that Pepys heard on June 12th, 1668, and pronounced "mighty tuneable."

The "George" keeps unmistakable evidences of its semi-ecclesiastical origin, and the Gothic character of the solid stonework in the lower storey points to the latter half of the fourteenth century. The curious and exceedingly picturesque contrast between the massive masonry below and the overhanging timbered upper part has led, without any other evidence, to the conjecture that

the house must at some time have suffered from fire, or otherwise been injured and partly rebuilt; but such instances of mixed methods in ancient building are numerous.

History of a romantic kind has been enacted here, for it was in the street of Norton St. Philip, that a furious skirmish was fought, June 26th, 1685, between the untrained and badly armed rustics of the rebel Duke of Monmouth, and the soldiers of King James, under command of the weak and vacillating Lord Feversham. The rebel peasantry, armed only with pikes, scythes, and billhooks, that day withstood and routed their enemies, and they held the village that night, Monmouth himself sleeping in one of the front bedrooms of the “George.” It was while dressing at this window the following morning that he was fired at by some unknown person desirous of earning the reward offered by James for the taking of his nephew’s life. The bullet, however, sped harmlessly by that preserver and champion of the Protestant liberties of the country: hence the invincible anonymity of the firer of that shot. Had Monmouth died thus, it is conceivable he would have come down to us a more manly historic figure.

The interior of the “George” is woefully disappointing, after the expectations raised by the noble exterior. It was obviously never ornately fitted, and long generations of neglect and misuse have resulted in the house being, internally, little better than a mere wreck, with the installation

of a vulgar bar to insult the Gothic feeling of the place. The property now belongs to the Bath Brewery Company, and is not merely that abomination, a "tied house," but is maintained in a barely habitable condition, the Company being reported of opinion that the Somersetshire Archaeological Society—interested, as all archæologists must be, in a house so architecturally and historically interesting—should restore the building. If that report be true, it is a striking example of colossal impudence.

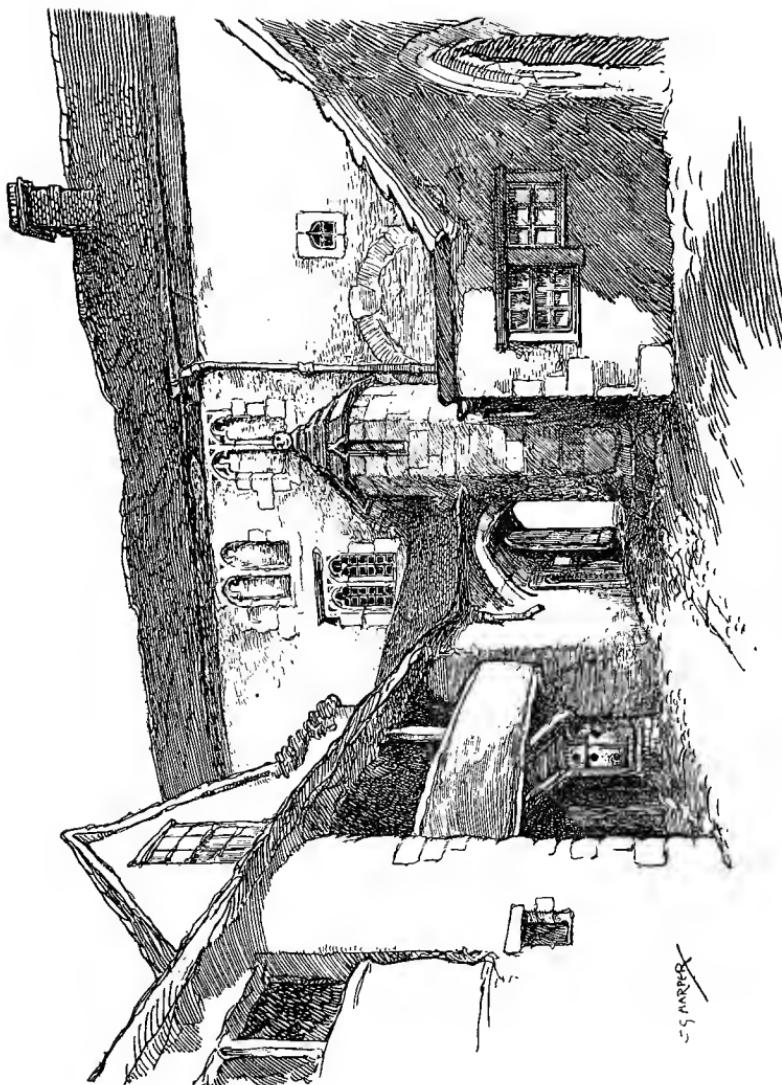
On the ground-floor, the present Tap-room keeps a large fire-place with old-fashioned grate. Above, mounting by a stone spiral staircase to the first floor, is the room used by Monmouth (the one to the right hand in the view), and known as the "King's Room." Its door, floor, and walls are of the roughest, as also are those of the adjoining room. On the floor above, running the whole length of the building, under the roof, is the long room used by the old wool-merchants as their market: and a darksome and makeshift place, under the roof-timbers, it is, and must have been at the best of times. To-day the floor is rotten, and you must go delicately, lest you fall through to the next floor, and then through that to the ground, where only the explorer can feel secure.

It is the same tale of far-gone decay in the yard, to which you enter, as also to the house itself, by the great archway in the village street. It was always a small yard, but was partly

galleried. The tottering remains of the gallery, with brewhouse below, are left, still filled with the enormous casks built in the brewhouse itself, and only to be removed by demolishing them. The rooms are mere ruins. If ever the interior and the yard of the “George” are restored it will be a great and an expensive work ; but it is to be feared that, Norton St. Philip being an unlikely place for lengthened resort—visitors coming from curiosity from Bath for merely an hour or so—such a work will never be undertaken.

In even worse case, from an archaeologist’s point of view, is the “George” at Winchcombe, in Gloucestershire ; for it stands in the High Street of a busy little town, and has been disastrously altered in recent years by the brewers who own it. Brewers have no undue leanings toward historic or architectural sentiment, and in this instance their object was to fit their house for use as a commercial hotel. Accordingly, they caused the ancient stone face to be pulled down and have replaced it by an imitation timbered gabled front. Something of what the old front was like may be discovered at the back, where the date, 1583, may be seen on the stonework, together with an inscription to the effect that it was restored in 1706.

The “George” was originally built as a pilgrims’ inn by the Abbots of Winchcombe and Hayles, whose noted West Country shrines attracted many thousands of the pious and the sinful in days gone by. At Winchcombe they had the body of St. Kenelm, the Saxon boy-king who succeeded to the



YARD OF THE "GEORGE," NORTON ST. PHILIP.



throne of Mercia in A.D. 822, and, according to legendary lore, was murdered at the instigation of his sister Cwoenthryth, who desired his place. Kenelm was but seven years of age, but already so pious, if we are to believe the story, that the poisons at first administered to him refused their customary effects, and there was nothing for it but to strike his head off. Piety, therefore, was not proof against cold steel.

His tutor, the treacherous Askobert, was induced to perform this act, in the lonely forest of Clent. To the astonishment of Askobert, a white dove flew from the severed neck and soared away into the sky. Naturally surprised by such a marvel, he nevertheless was not unnerved, and buried the body under a thorn-bush and went his way. Cwoenthryth in due course succeeded, and reigned for some two years, when the inevitable vengeance fell. It came about in a curious way—as do all these retributions in monastic legends. The Pope was celebrating Mass in his Cathedral of St. Peter when a dove that had been observed there poised itself over the high altar and dropped from its beak a piece of parchment inscribed, “In Clent in Cowbach Kenelm Kynge’s child lieth under a thorn, his head taken from him.”

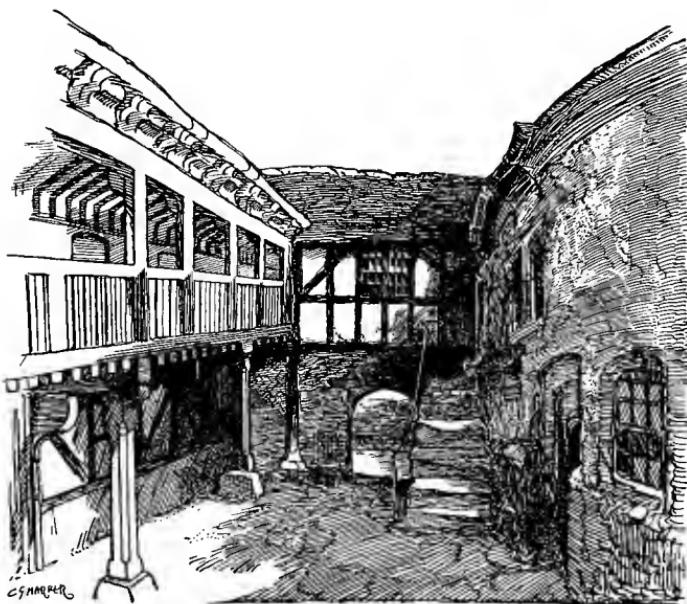
This strange message was conveyed to England, and an expedition, formed of the monks of Winchcombe and Worcester, set off to the forest of Clent. Arrived there, the expeditionary force was guided to the thorn-tree by a white cow, and duly found the body. After disputing whose

property it was to become, they decided that, as they were all wearied with the journey and their exertions, they should, every one, lie down and rest, the body to become the possession of those who should first arise. The Winchcombe men were first awake, and were well away over the hills with their prize before the monks of Worcester ceased from their snoring, yawned, opened their eyes, and found the treasure gone.

The miraculous power of St. Kenelm manifested itself on the way, for the men of Winchcombe, fainting on their journey for lack of water, prayed, for the love of him, to be guided to some spring; when immediately a gush of water burst forth from the hillside. Thus refreshed, they came into Winchcombe, where the wicked Cwoenthryth, whom later generations have agreed to name, in more simple fashion, Quenride, was reading that very comminatory Psalm, the 109th, wherein all manner of disasters are invoked upon the Psalmist's enemies. There has ever been considered some especial virtue in reciting prayers and invocations backwards, and Quenride, having gone through the Psalm in the ordinary way, was proceeding to take it in reverse when the procession came winding along the street. At that moment her eyes fell out; and, to bear witness to the truth of the story, the Abbey of Winchcombe long exhibited, among the greatest of its treasures, the blood-stained psalter on whose pages they fell—which, of course, was convincing.

Can we wonder that, in those credulous ages,

pilgrimage to Winchcombe should have been a popular West Country practice? And if not to St. Kenelm's shrine, there was the peculiarly holy relic of the neighbouring Abbey of Hayles, where the monks treasured nothing less tremendous



YARD OF THE "GEORGE," WINCHCOMBE.

than a bottle of Christ's blood. This in after years—as was to be supposed—was discovered to be a blasphemous imposture, the precious phial being declared by the examining Commissioners in the time of Henry the Eighth to contain merely "an unctuous gum, coloured."

A pilgrims' inn at Winchcombe was, in view of the crowds naturally resorting to either or both

of these Abbeys, a very necessary institution, and for long the “George” so remained.

The ways of the brewers with the old house have been already in part recorded and the destruction of much of interest deplored, but there still remains a little of its former state. There is, for instance, the great archway at the side, with the oaken spandrels carved with foliage and the initials R. K.; standing for Richard Kyderminster, Abbot of Winchcombe at some period in the fifteenth century. Through this archway runs the yard, down to the back of the town, and there is what is still called the “Pilgrims’ Gallery,” on one side. One scarcely knows which of the two courses adopted by the brewers with this old inn was the most disastrous: the actual demolition of the old frontage, or the “restoration” of the Pilgrims’ Gallery in so thorough a manner that it is, in almost every respect, a new structure. Nor does it, as of old, conduct to bedrooms, for that part of the house giving upon it has been reconstructed as a large room, available for entertainments or public dinners.

There is something peculiarly appropriate in the refectory of a monastic house becoming an inn. Such is the history of the “Lord Crewe Arms,” at Blanchland.

It is a far cry to that picturesque and quiet village, in stern and rugged Northumberland; but you may be sure that, however wild and forbidding the surrounding country, the site and the immediate neighbourhood of an ancient abbey

will prove to be fertile, sheltered, and beautiful; and Blanchland, the old home of an Abbey of Praemonstratensian canons, is no exception to this rule.

Whichever way the traveller comes into Blanchland, he comes by hills more or less precipitous, and by moors chiefly remarkable for their savage and worthless nature, and it is a welcome change when, from the summit of a steep hill, he at last looks down upon the quiet place, nestling in a hollow on the Northumbrian side of the little river Derwent, that here separates the counties of Northumberland and Durham.

Down there, still remote from the busy world, the village is slowly but surely fading out of existence, as we learn from the cold, dispassionate figures of the Census returns, which record the fact that in 1811 the inhabitants numbered 518, while in 1901 they were but 232.

It is a compact little place. There is the ancient bridge, built by the monks, across the Derwent, still, in the words of Froissart, "strong and rapid and full of large stones and rocks"; and there are the church-tower, the old Abbey gatehouse, the "Lord Crewe Arms," and some few houses, forming four sides of a square. "The place," as Walter Besant truly says in his novel, *Dorothy Forster*, "has the aspect of an ancient and decayed college."

Blanchland owes everything to its old abbey, conducted under the rules of the original brethren

of Prémonté, and even derived its name of Blanche Lande from the white habits of the monks; just as Whitland in Carmarthenshire, took its name from a similar history.

The Abbey of Blanchland was founded here, at “Wulwardshope,” as the place was originally named, in 1163, and, rebuilt and added to from time to time, flourished until the heavy hand of Henry the Eighth and his commissioners ended it, in 1536. In all those long centuries it had remained obscure, both in its situation and its history; and was indeed so difficult to come to that tradition tells a picturesque story of mediæval Scottish raiders failing to find the place and so returning home, when its situation was revealed to them by the bells the monks were ringing, to express joy at their deliverance. Alas! it was their own funeral knell the brethren rang; for, guided by the sound, those Border ruffians entered Blanchland, burnt its Abbey and slew the monks.

Shortly after the suppression of the Abbey under Henry the Eighth, the monastic lands became the property, and the domestic buildings of the Abbey the home, of the Radcliffe family, and afterwards of the Forsters, who, according to the wholly irreverent, and half-boastful, half-satirical local saying, were older than the oldest of county families, for “the Almighty first created the world and Adam and Eve, and then He made the Forsters.”

Blanchland was at last lost to that long-descended race by the treason of General Forster,

who was concerned in the rising of 1715, and so forfeited his estates ; and in 1721 the property was purchased by Nathaniel Crewe, Bishop of Durham, who at the age of sixty-seven had married Dorothy Forster, at that time twenty-four years of age.

The present inn, the "Lord Crewe Arms," is a portion of the old refectory buildings on the west



THE "LORD CREWE ARMS," BLANCHLAND.

side of the cloister garth, but many alterations and additions have been made since those times, and the actual oldest part is the ancient monastic fireplace, very much disguised by later generations, and in the fact that it is now in use as the fireplace of the modern kitchen.

In the fine drawing-room of the inn, formerly the ball-room of the Forster mansion, hangs a portrait of Lord Crewe, that time-serving re-

actionary sycophant under James the Second and would-be toady to William the Third. His public life was a version, on a higher plane, of that of the celebrated Vicar of Bray, and he succeeded admirably in his determination to stick to his principles—to live and die Bishop-Palatine of Durham; for as Lord Bishop he remained until his death, aged eighty-nine, in 1722, in the reign of George the Second.

But he well deserves the honour of the inn being named after him, for he left his wealth in various charities, the rent of the inn itself forming a portion of the income of the Crewe trustees.

Our ultimate example of a monastic hostel is found at Aylesbury, a town whose name would, to imaginative persons, appear at the first blush to indicate a happy hunting-ground for old inns; but although—Shakespeare to the contrary—there is usually very much in a name, the meaning is not always—and in place-names not often—what it would seem to be. Thus, Aylesbury is not the town of ale, but (a very different thing), Aeglesberge, *i.e.* “the Church Town,” a name it obtained in Saxon times, when the surrounding country was godless, and this place exceptionally provided.

At the same time, Aylesbury—the place also of ducks and of dairies—*was* once notable for an exceedingly fine inn: none other than the great galleried “White Hart,” first modernised in 1814, when its gabled, picturesque front was pulled down and replaced by a commonplace red-brick

front, in the style, or lack of style, then prevalent; and finally cleared away in 1863, to make room for the existing Corn Exchange and Market House.



THE "OLD KING'S HEAD," AYLESBURY.

Coming into Aylesbury, in quest of inns, one looks at that building with dismay. Was it really to build such a horrific thing they demolished the "White Hart"? How deplorable!

Aylesbury is a town where, late at night, the police foregather in the reverberative Market Square, instead of going their individual beats; and there, through the small hours, they talk and laugh, hawk and spit, and make offensive noises, until the sleepless stranger longs to open his window and throw things at them. Happy he whose bedroom does not look upon their rendezvous! But this is merely incidental. More germane to the matter under consideration is the fact that, although the "White Hart" be gone, Aylesbury still keeps a remarkably fine inn, of the smaller sort, in the "Old King's Head," which, if not indeed a pilgrims' inn, seems to have been originally built by some religious fraternity as a hospice or guest-house for travellers. Of its history and of the original building nothing is known, the present house dating from 1444-50. You discover the "Old King's Head" in a narrow street off the market-place, and at the first glimpse of it perceive that here is something quite exceptionally fine. A sketch is, if it be any good at all, always worth a page of description, and so we will let the accompanying illustration take the place of mere verbiage. Only let it be observed that the larger gable and the window in it are new, having been rebuilt in 1880.

The great window, entirely constructed of oak, is the chief feature of the exterior, just as the noble room it lights is the principal object of interest in the house itself. The point most worthy of consideration here is that in this

remarkably fine window, and in the room itself, you have an unaltered and unrestored work of the fifteenth century. In early ages the house was an inn with some ecclesiastical tie, and when it passed from the hands of the brotherhood (whoever they may have been) that once owned it, and became a secularised hostelry, it seems to have continued its career with very little alteration beyond that of adopting as a sign the "King's Head": that king doubtless originally Henry the Eighth himself. The house was, in the seventeenth century, one of the Aylesbury inns that issued tokens, for in museums and private collections are still to be found copper pieces inscribed "At ye King's Head In Aillsburey, W.E.D. 1657." There still existed, until comparatively recent times, traces of old galleries in the extensive yard, but modern changes have at last completely abolished them.

The fine room of which the great window forms one complete side was no doubt originally the common-room of the hostel. It is now the tap-room. A fine lofty hall it makes: oaken pillars, black with age, springing from each corner, based upon stone plinths and supporting finely moulded beams that, crossing in the ceiling, divide it into nine square compartments. The great window, divided by mullions and a transom into twenty lights, is of course seen to best advantage from within, and still keeps much of the original armorial stained glass.

## CHAPTER VIII

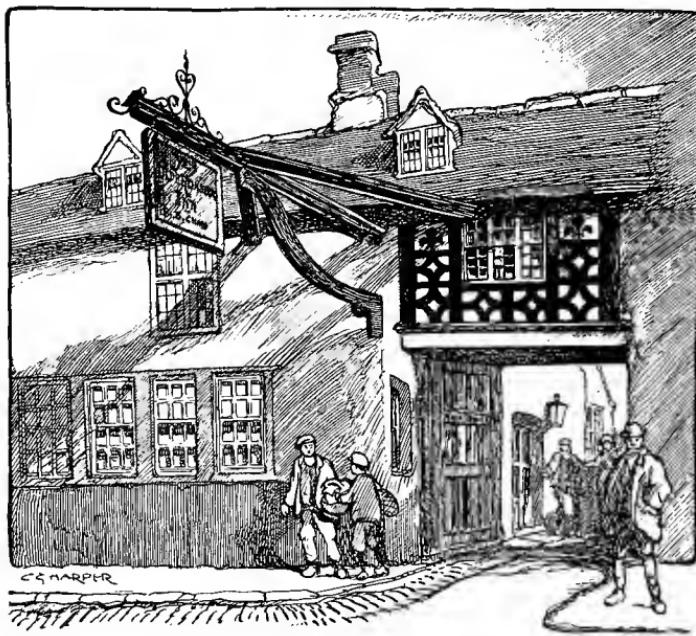
### HISTORIC INNS

IT can be no matter for surprise that many inns have historic associations. Indeed, when we consider that in olden times the hostelries of town and country touched life at every point, and were once the centre of local life, it becomes rather surprising that not more tragic events, more treaties and conferences, and more plots and conspiracies are associated with such places of public resort.

Strange, mysterious plotters, highwaymen, and great nobles resorted to them, and, coming to things more domestic, there, under the inn's hospitable roof, town councils not infrequently met in those times before ever "municipal buildings" were dreamed of, and conducted their business over a cheering, and inebriating, cup. Your inn was, in short, then at once your railway-station, club, hotel, reading-room and mart. There were distinct advantages, in the social sense, in all this. It meant good-fellowship when respectable towns-folk were not ashamed to spend a winter evening in the parlour of a representative inn, or play a game of bowls in summer on the bowling-green with which most such houses were once furnished,

and the man who now glowers in unneighbourly and solitary way over his hearthstone, would expand, with such opportunities, into as good-natured a fellow as any of the olden time.

The inns of Banbury make some historic figure. It was in one of them—the chronicler says not



THE "REINDEER," BANBURY.

which—that the dispute took place between the two Yorkist commanders, which led to the battle of Danesmoor being lost by their side, in July, 1469.

The occasion was the revolt of the great Earl of Warwick against Edward the Fourth. To intercept Warwick at Northampton the Earl of

Pembroke was marching with a force from Gloucestershire, and was joined on the Cotswolds by Lord Stafford of Southwick, newly raised a step in the peerage by being created Earl of Devon. Lord Stafford's troops numbered six thousand good archers: a very welcome reinforcement; but, even so, the combined forces dared not at once risk an engagement with the rebels at Daventry, and fell back upon Banbury. There a quarrel took place between Lord Stafford and the Earl of Pembroke, all on account of a pretty girl. Says Hall: "The earle of Pembroke putt the Lorde Stafforde out of an Inne, wherein he delighted muche to be, for the loue of a damosell that dwelled in the house: contrary to their mutuall agrement by them taken, which was, that whosoever abteined first a lodgyng should not be deceaved nor remoued. After a greate many woordes and crakes, had betwene these twoo capitaines, the lord Stafford of Southwyke, in greate dispiste departed with his whole compaignie and band of Archers, leauynge the erle of Pembroke almost desolate in the toune."

Accordingly, so weakened, the next day the Earl of Pembroke was defeated. He took refuge in Banbury church, but, according to Hall, was dragged forth by the fierce John Clapham, who beheaded him in the porch with his own hands.

Possibly it was at the "Red Lion," in the High Street, that the damosell lived who caused all the strife between those great lords. If so, it renders that fine old house the more interesting.

Modern needs, and a not unreasonable desire to keep incoming guests and their belongings dry, have caused the picturesque courtyard to be roofed in with glass, thus hiding many of its pictorial qualities; but you still enter from the street by a fifteenth-century oaken portal, much blunted by wear and tear and many successive coats of paint and varnish in all those succeeding centuries; yet indubitably still fifteenth-century work.

But the most picturesque inn at Banbury is the "Reindeer." History is silent as to the why or the how of its acquiring that name, and is indeed dumb in almost every other respect concerning the old house. The "Reindeer," both in itself and in its situation, is scarcely like the "Red Lion," an hotel. You look in at the "Reindeer" for a drink and for curiosity only; for the house does not precisely invite guests, and probably does most business on market days, when country folk from neighbouring villages throng the strait and crooked streets of Banbury and put up their traps in its yard and insist on liberally drinking the health of one another. Parson's Street, indeed, the situation of the "Reindeer," is a market-street and crowded shopping centre, where brazen-tongued salesmen exhort housewives to "buy, buy, buy"; or indulge in rhapsodical, exclamatory passages in praise of their goods. You are gazing, let us say, outside the "original" Banbury-cake shop, opposite, upon the magpie black and white of the "Reindeer" frontage, when a parrot-like voice is heard

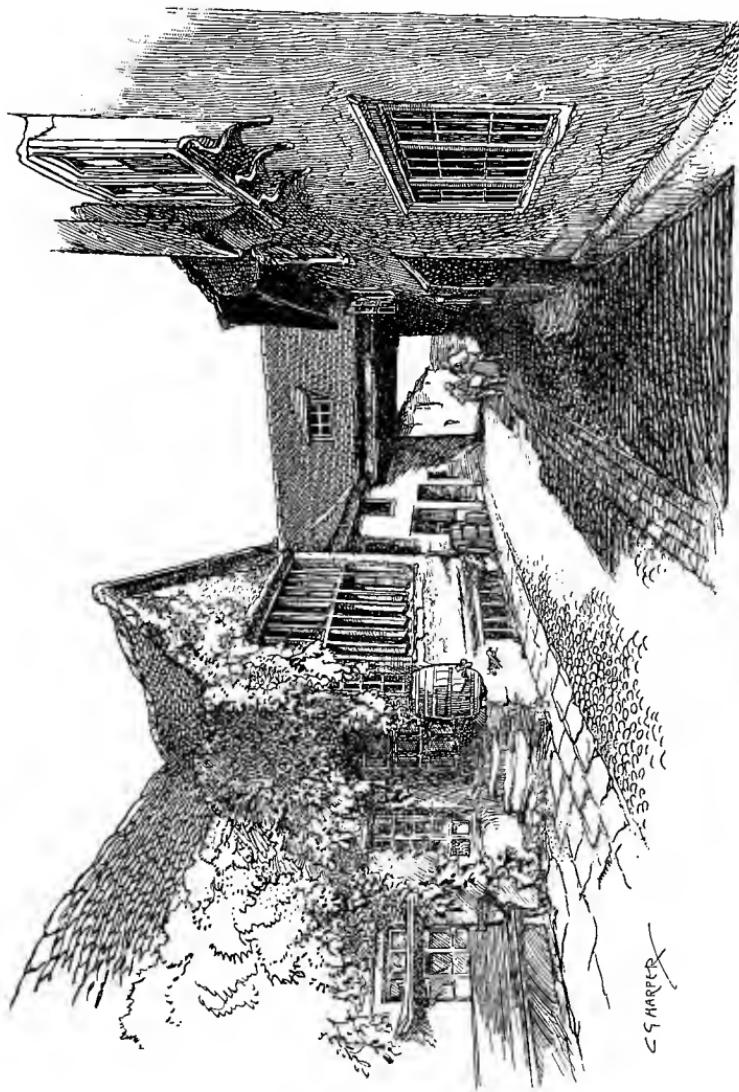
exclaiming, in ecstatic rapture, “O what loverly heggs !” and, turning, you perceive, not a grey parrot in a gilded cage, but a white-aproned provision-dealer’s assistant, unfortunately at large. Fleeing into the courtyard of the inn, you still hear faint cries of “*There’s ‘am !*” “O mother ! what butter !”

The neighbourhood, it will be perceived, does not in these days lend itself to quiet residence, and although, by the evidence of its architecture, the “Reindeer” was doubtless at one time one of the chief hotels of the town, it has long ceased to hold anything like that position.

The old oaken gates and the black-and-white timbering above appear to be the oldest portions of the house: the gates themselves inscribed with the date “1570” on one side, and on the other

“IHON · KNIGHT ♦ IHONE · KNIGHT ♦ DAVID · HORN.”

The great feature of the inn is, however, the noble oak-panelled chamber known, for whatever inscrutable reason, as the “Globe Room.” Exterior and interior views of it are the merest commonplaces in Banbury. There are, in fact, three things absolutely necessary, nay, almost sacramental, for the stranger to do in Banbury, without having performed the which he is a scorn and a derision. The first of these indispensable performances is the eating, or, at any rate, the buying of Banbury cakes. And here let me add that the Banbury cakes of Banbury have a lightness and a toothsomeness entirely



YARD OF THE "REINDEER," BANBURY.



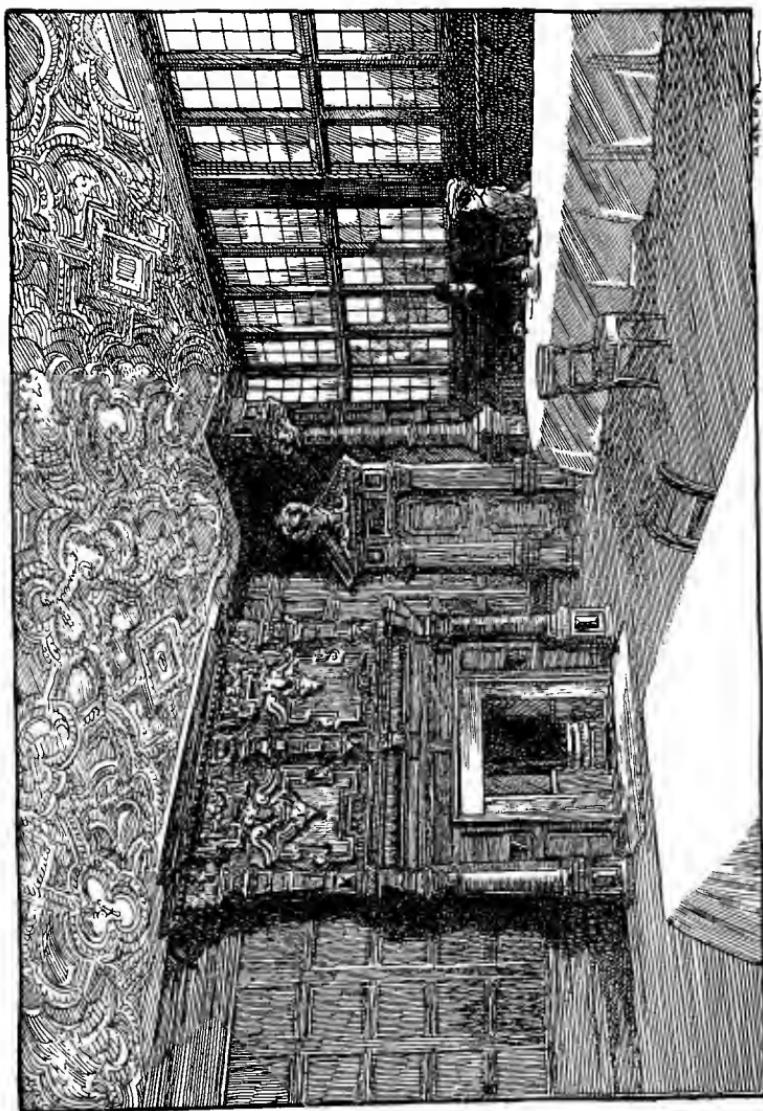
lacking in the specious impostors made elsewhere. Just as there are no other such pork-pies as those of Melton Mowbray, and as Shrewsbury cakes can apparently only be made at Shrewsbury, so the “Banburys” made in other towns are apt to lie as heavy on your chest as a peccadillo upon a tender conscience. But in their native town they disappear, to the accompaniment of cups of tea, with a rapidity alarming to the pocket, if not to the stomach; for they cost “tuppence” apiece, and a hungry pedestrian or cyclist finds no difficulty in demolishing half a dozen of them.

The second of these necessary observances is the viewing of Banbury Cross: not the old original famous Banbury Cross of the nursery rhyme, to which many generations of children have been invited to “ride a cock-horse” to see the tintinnabulatory lady with bells on her fingers and bells on her toes; *that* cross was destroyed by the Puritans, and the modern one is not even a copy of it, for no man knoweth what the original was like.

The third of these necessary rites is the viewing of the “Globe Room” at the “Reindeer.” What the exterior of that room is like, let the illustration of the courtyard show. The date of its building is still faintly traceable in the figures “1637” on the masonry of the gable. They charge you threepence to view the interior, and if so be you cannot frame to admire the richly decorated plaster ceiling for yourself, the printed notice that a cast has been taken from it,

and is to be seen in South Kensington Museum, is calculated to impress the intellectually snobbish. For our own part, seeing things with our own eyes and judging of them comparatively, there seems no very adequate reason for South Kensington acquiring such a cast, unless, indeed, (which is unthinkable) the Department of Science and Art is bent upon copies of all the old ceilings in the country. This is, in short, to say that although the plaster decoration of the "Globe Room" is fine, it is neither so intrinsically fine, nor so original above all others, that it deserves so great an honour. The really supremely fine feature of the room is the beautiful Jacobean panelling in oak, now almost coal-black with age, covering the walls from floor to ceiling, and designed and wrought in unusually thorough and bold style. There is not a finer room of its period in the country, and it may even be questioned (leaving the mere matter of size alone) if there is even another quite so fine or in every detail so perfect.

The reason of this magnificently panelled apartment being added to the older and very much less ornate portion of the inn is obscure; and it will be noted, as a matter of curiosity, that, entered as it is only by a doorway from the open courtyard, the room is not, structurally a part of the house. The name of the "Globe Room" given to it is not explained in any way by the decorations or by its history, which is as obscure as its origin. Tradition says Cromwell



THE GLOBE ROOM, "REINDEER" INN, BANBURY.



“held a council” here, and accordingly, although history does not tell us anything specifically about it, a picture, reproduced in a variety of ways, showing a number of stern and malignant Roundheads interrogating an elegant and angelic-looking Royalist clad in white, and bearing a very strong likeness to Charles the First himself, is one of the commonplaces of the town.

For one of the most entertaining examples of history enacted at an inn, we must shift the scene to Chester.

Among the ancient inns of that city, long since retired from the innkeeping business is the “Blue Posts,” a house in its day historic by reason of one dramatic incident: an incident so dramatic that it would almost seem to have been borrowed from the stage. It was the year 1558, the last of the reign of Queen Mary, of bloody memory, and Dr. Henry Cole, Dean of St. Paul’s, was come to Chester on his way to Ireland, where he had work to do, in the persecution of the Irish Protestants. He lodged for the night at the “Blue Posts,” in Bridge Street, and in the evening the Mayor of Chester called upon him there.

The Dean made no secret of his mission. To him it was a labour of love to bring imprisonment and torture, fire and stake, to correct the religious errors of those Protestants over sea. Had he not already distinguished himself by a revolting and bloodthirsty sermon, on the occasion of Cranmer’s sentence of martyrdom?

In conversation with the Mayor, he drew from

his travelling valise the Royal commission for his errand. "Here," he exclaimed, with exultation, "here is that will lash the heretics of Ireland!"

Now, whether the landlady was in the room at the time, or listening at the keyhole—in a manner traditional among landladies—does not appear; but she overheard the conversation, and, having a brother, a Protestant, in Dublin, was alarmed for his safety in particular, and, let us hope, for that of Protestants in general. So, that night, when the Dean was doubtless dreaming of the shackles and gyves, the faggots and the rackings he was bringing to the heretics of Ireland, Mrs. Mottershead, the landlady with the sharp ears, abstracted the fateful commission, and in its stead placed a pack of cards, with the knave of clubs showing satirically at the top. O! daring and witty Mrs. Mottershead!

We may, if gifted with anything like a due sense of humour, well chuckle at the outraged feelings of the Lord President of the Council of Ireland when the Dean, all unconscious, presented him with this unconventional authority. My Lord, however, summoned some humour of his own, wherewith to meet the situation. "Let us," said he, "have another commission, and we will meanwhile shuffle the cards."

Crestfallen, the emissary returned, and did actually obtain a new commission, but when again arrived at Chester, and awaiting a fair wind for Ireland, he heard of the Catholic Queen's death

and the accession of her Protestant sister ; and so found his way back to London once more.

The episode would fitly end in the Dean being flung, loaded with chains, into some loathsome dungeon ; but although he was, in fact, committed to the Tower in 1560, after having been deprived



THE "MUSIC HOUSE," NORWICH.

of all his preferments, such dramatic completeness was lacking. But, at any rate, he was transferred to the Fleet Prison, and, after a long captivity, seems to have died there in 1580.

Meanwhile, virtue was rewarded, in the person of Mrs. Mottershead, who was granted a pension

of £40 a year, representing perhaps £500 a year in our own day.

The former “Blue Posts,” where this historic interlude was played, was long since refronted in respectable, but dull, red brick, and is now, or was recently, a boot-shop. But although no hint of its former self is given to the passer-by, those who venture to make a request, are shown a fine upstairs room, with elaborately parqueted ceiling, still known as the “Card Room.”

The “Music House” inn, King Street, Norwich, situated in what is now a poor and densely populated part of that city, has a vaulted cellar of Norman masonry, a vestige of the time when the Norwich Jews were very rich and numerous. The house of which it formed part was then the residence of one Moyses, and afterwards of Isaac, his nephew, who in the reign of King John seems to have come, like many of his race, to some mysterious and uncomfortable end, probably in the dungeons of Norwich Castle. In the course of time the famous Paston family came into possession of the house, and in 1633 the great lawyer, Sir Edward Coke, resided here. Shortly afterwards it became the meeting-place of the “city music,” ancestors of modern town bands, who seem to have practised the waits and other performances within, until they had their parts sufficiently perfect to dare inflict them on the city. Hence the sign of the “Music House.”

In the same neighbourhood we have the

“Dolphin” inn at Potter Heigham, a place sadly changed in modern times.

Potter Heigham is no longer rural, and the long, long and narrow street leading to it, out of Norwich, is crowded with the waggons and railway-lorries of the old city’s expanding commerce. In midst of all this rumbling of wheels over uneven pavements stands the “Dolphin”



THE “DOLPHIN,” POTTER HEIGHAM.

inn, the home in his declining days of Bishop Hall, who rented it for some ten years, until his death there, in 1656, in his eighty-second year.

It was a comparatively new house then, for while you see the date, 1587, over the entrance door and a merchant’s mark and the initials R B on either side, a prominent gable shows the date 1629 done, very large, in vitrified brick.

Still you come grandly into the house, though

it be a humble tavern now, between an old pillared entrance, and across a courtyard, and in the house are Jacobean fireplaces, with a fine newel staircase carved in the manner of an old church bench-end, with an heraldic lion and the Gothic foliage known as a “poppy head.” The “Dolphin” would be capable, if it were differently situated, of being converted into a handsome old-world hotel, but the poor and crowded neighbourhood of Potter Heigham forbids anything of that kind, and so it remains humble and unassuming.

A tragical little story belongs to the humble old “Nag’s Head” inn at Thame, formerly the “King’s Head.” The old sign of it was used as a gallows for a Parliamentary rebel who had deserted his side and joined the King, and was so unlucky as to be captured. Those Puritans had a grim humour. One of the condemned man’s executioners, before turning him off, turned his face, bound with a handkerchief, to the sign, with the words: “Nay, sir, you must speak one word with the King before you go. You are blindfold, and he cannot see, and by and by you shall both come down together.” And then he was hoisted up.

There is another historic house at Thame, for it was into the yard of the “Greyhound” in that town that John Hampden came, lying mortally wounded upon the neck of his horse, from the skirmish of Chalgrove Field, on June 18th, 1643. He had unwillingly taken arms against oppression and iniquitous taxation; and was thus at the outset killed. No enemy’s bullet laid him low:

it was his own pistol, overloaded by a careless servant, that, exploding, shattered his hand. He died, on the 24th, of lockjaw.

The front of the house has been rebuilt, and the yard somewhat altered, since the patriot rode in at that tragical time; but the house is in



THE "NAG'S HEAD," THAME.

essentials the inn of his day. Long since ceased to be an inn, it is now occupied as a furnishing ironmonger's shop and warehouse.

The "Crown and Treaty House" inn at Uxbridge, long known to would-be beery rustics by the affectionately wistful name of the "Crown and Treat Ye," is a genuinely historic house. It stands away beyond the tramway terminus, facing

the road at the very extremity of Uxbridge town, as you cross canal and river and so leave Middlesex for Buckinghamshire; and although very much of its real antiquity is disguised by modern paint and plaster, it is in fact the surviving portion of the great mansion built in 1575 by one of the Bennet family, and, at the opening of the war between King and Parliament, in the occupation of one "Mr. Carr."

The meeting here of leading spirits on either side of the contending forces was well meant. It began January 20th, 1645, and was convened for the purpose of "taking into consideration the grievances of which each party complained, and to propose those remedies which might be mutually agreeable." Unfortunately, little sincerity attended the actual meeting. The King's party were unyielding, and the military successes of the Parliament rendered the leaders of that side ill-disposed to give away in talk that which they had won in the field. Moreover, like most conferences in which religious as well as political questions were the subjects of discussion, those debates only further inflamed mutual hatreds and further sundered the already wide points of disagreement.

There were sixteen commissioners on either side, and for three weeks they argued without coming to any settlement. Neither side would give way, for either was convinced of its ability to finally crush the other by force of arms. Much blood had already been shed, indecisively, and

passions ran high. Uxbridge was selected as a kind of half-way house between London, held strongly by the Parliament, and Oxford, as strongly held for the King ; and when the empty



YARD OF THE "GREYHOUND," THAME.

verbiage was done, the propositions put forth scouted, and the pretensions disallowed, the parties separated, falling back respectively to London and to Oxford, to recommence those hostilities for which they were spoiling. Treaty, therefore,

there was not: only an ominous truce between Right Divine and People's Will.

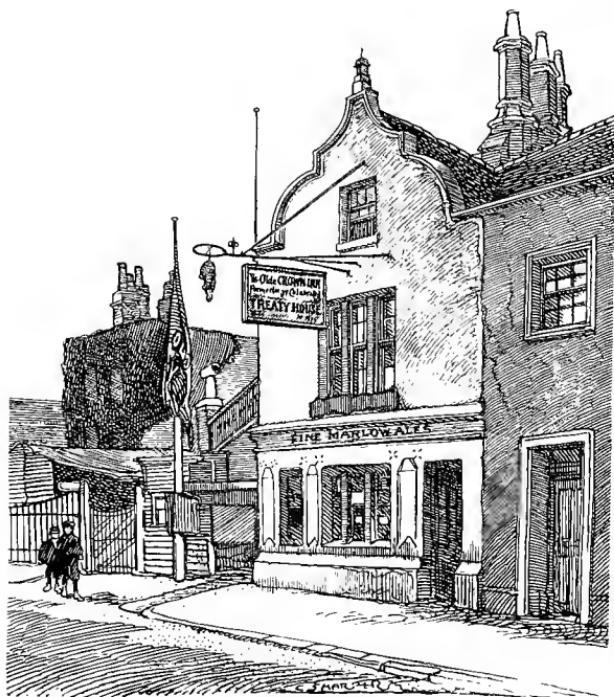
The Earl of Clarendon, in his *History of the Rebellion*, gives an interesting account of these fruitless meetings:

“There was,” he says, “a good house at the end of the town which was provided for the Treaty. Above was a fair room in the middle of the house, handsomely dressed up for the Commissioners to sit in; a large square table being placed in the middle with seats for the Commissioners; one side being sufficient for those of either party: and a rail for those who should be thought necessary to be present, which went round. There were many other rooms on either side of this great room for the Commissioners to retire to, when they thought fit to consult by themselves, and there being good stairs at either end of the house they never went through each other's quarters, nor met, but in the great room.”

Neither side used the house, except for these meetings, the Royalists being appropriately accommodated at the “Crown,” which then stood in the middle of the High Street, in the centre of the town, opposite the still-existing “White Horse,” and the Parliament people at the “George.”

In those times the highway out of Uxbridge, ceasing to be broad and straight, left the High Street of Uxbridge by a sharp turning to the right and went in a narrow way called Johnson's Row to the crossing of the Colne, which was

effected to the north of the present bridge and was made in two stages by wooden bridges, using the still-surviving island in the middle of the river as a kind of natural pier or abutment. The road therefore crossed, in a more or less direct

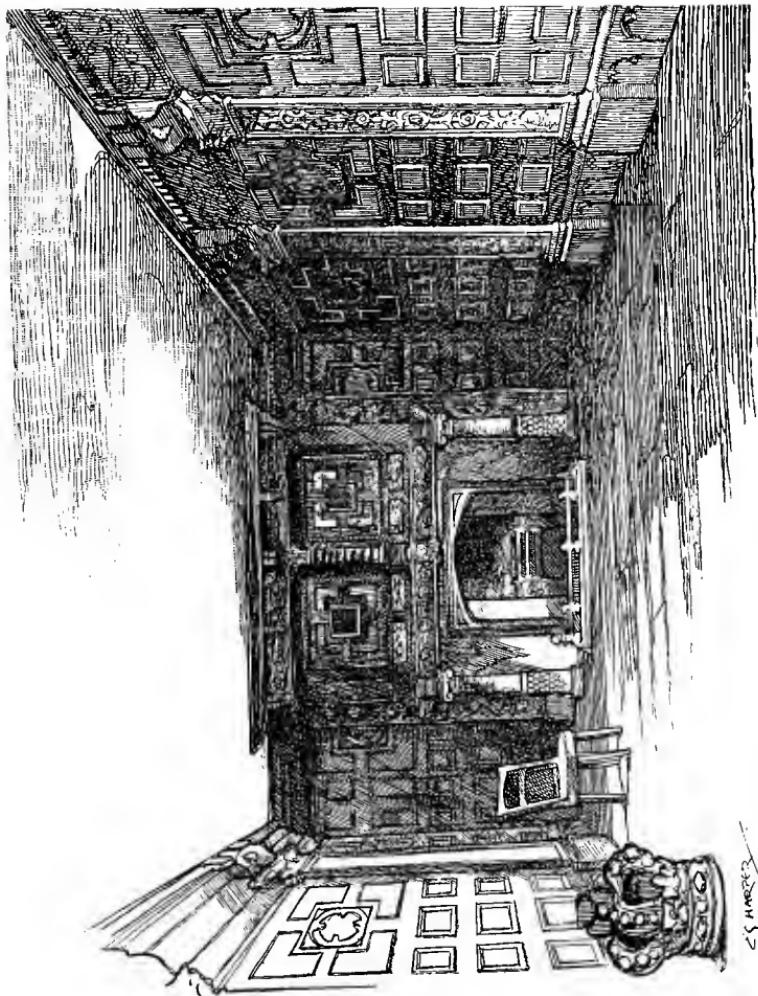


THE "CROWN AND TREATY," UXBRIDGE.

fashion, from immediately in front of the "Swan and Bottle" inn to where the present flour-mill stands, cautiously using that very considerable island on the way. The modern road, with its bridge of seven arches, on the other hand, boldly spans the river at its widest part, and seeks no

help midway. It is all very clear and palpable to you who stand on the bridge and see how the road across it swoops round, at a very noticeable angle, to join the older road at the flour-mill ; but Johnson's Row was demolished 1905-6, to make an approach to the new railway-station, and the old landmarks are growing obscured. It was the making of this road in 1785 that changed the fortunes of the Treaty House. The new highway was cut through its gardens, and the house itself brought from private life and a dignified seclusion to face the wayfaring world. What else, then, could it do but become an inn ?

The house, although even now not small, was once much larger. Its least imposing front is turned to the street and is not improved by the modern appointments of a public-house. The great feature of the building is the room on the first floor, called, with what appears to be insufficient warranty, the "Treaty Room," the real place of meeting having been, apparently, the front room, now divided by a partition into two. It was doubtless its being immeasurably the finest room in the house that led to the so-called "Treaty Room" being selected for that honour. It is, in fact, a noble apartment, greatly neglected for these many years past, but grand in spite of indifference and decay. There are smeary picture-postcards of it to be purchased in Uxbridge, and it has been photographed by enthusiastic visitors times without number, generally without success ; for it is a dark



THE "TREATY ROOM," "CROWN AND TREATY," UXBRIDGE.

C. HARRIS



interior, and the wood-carving is shallow and does not yield sufficient pictorial light and shade for the cameras to do it justice. It should be added, by way of comparative criticism, that, although this panelling is itself so fine, it does not for a moment compare with the bold and effective work of the "Globe Room" at the "Reindeer," Banbury. There you have a massiveness of construction and a breadth of design almost



THE "RED LION," HILLINGDON.

architectural: here there are no bold projections, and the recurrent flat pilasters are covered with an intricate Renaissance scroll and strap-work, which, although in itself good, is too small in scale to be highly effective.

The "Red Lion" at Hillingdon, near Uxbridge, has its small share in the troubled story of the Stuarts, although, to be sure, its plastered front is a thought too modern-looking. Here Charles the First, escaping from the

besieged city of Oxford, lay the first night of his distracted wanderings through England that led him eventually to the end of his armed resistance, at Southwell.

The "Three Crowns" at Chagford, South Devon, now a favourite old-world haunt of tourists visiting Dartmoor, illustrates still another incident in that internecine warfare. It was



THE "THREE CROWNS," CHAGFORD.

originally a manor-house built in the time of Henry the Eighth by Sir John Whydon, a native of Chagford, who went to London to seek his fortune, and, as a lawyer, found it. He became a Judge of the King's Bench, was knighted, and we are gravely told that he was the first judge to ride to Westminster on a horse: his predecessors, and his learned contemporary brethren, had gone on mules.

In the troubled times of the Civil War, when Royalist and Roundhead disturbed even these remote nooks of the country, Chagford was attacked by the Royalists under Sir John Berkeley. In the street-fighting, according to Clarendon, "they lost Sidney Godolphin, a young gentleman of incomparable parts. He received a mortal shot by a musket, a little above the knee, of which he died on the instant, leaving the misfortune of his death upon a place which could never otherwise have had a mention in the world." Ay! but that was written in days long before the appreciation of picturesque scenery had brought troops of visitors to Chagford.

Young Godolphin bled to death on a stone seat of what is now, as Charles Kingsley wrote, "a beautiful old mullioned and gabled Perpendicular inn."

What was once the "great hall" of the old mansion is now a schoolroom. Both face the church, on the other side of the narrow street, as an old manor-house should do, and in summer time the gossipers lounge and talk, and interpolate their gossiping with loud horseLaughs, far into the night, greatly to the annoyance of visitors. Have I not heard, with these ears, the raising of a sash at some incredible hour, and the voice of some native of Bawston or N'York, exclaiming indignantly, "See yur, you darned skunks, clear out of it!" whereupon, with cat-calls and insults in the *patois* of Devonshire, fortunately not with ease to be understood by strangers

from the U.S., that village convention has dispersed.

Many historic memories linger around that ancient and beautiful house, the "Saracen's Head" at Southwell, in the Sherwood Forest district of Nottinghamshire. Southwell, whose hoary Minster has in modern times become a cathedral, has fallen into a dreamless slumber since the last of the coaches left the road, and as the traveller comes into its quiet streets, in whose midst the great Norman church stands solemnly, like some grey architectural ghost, he feels that he has come into a place whose last days of activity ended considerably over half a century ago.

The "Saracen's Head" was built in that interesting, but vague, period of "ever so long ago"; the nearest attempt at determining its age to which most chroniclers dare commit themselves. Whether the existing house is the same building as that of this name conveyed by the Archbishop of York in 1396 to John Fysher and his wife Margaret, does not appear, but there seems very little reason to doubt that, although greatly altered and added to from time to time, the present "Saracen's Head" is, essentially, in its ancient timbering, the identical structure.

The frontage of the inn, now as ever the chief inn of Southwell, little indicates its great age, for it is covered with a coat of grey plaster, and, were it not for the enormously substantial oaken doors of the coach-entrance, and the peep through the

archway of the old courtyard, the casual wayfarer might pass the historic house by.

For it is historic, in an intimate and a melancholy way. Dismissing in a word the remote visits paid by Edward the First and Edward the Third to Southwell, when they are stated to have lodged at the “Saracen’s Head,” we come to the



YARD OF THE “SARACEN’S HEAD,” SOUTHWELL.

harassed wanderings of Charles the First over the distracted England of his time. That unhappy King well knew Southwell and the “Saracen’s Head.” They were associated with the opening and the closing scenes of his fight with Parliament and people, for he rested at the inn on August 17th, 1642, on the way to raise the Royal Standard at Nottingham on the 22nd; and at last, on May

5th, 1646, he abandoned the nearly four years' struggle against fate, surrendering himself here to the Scottish Commissioners. Between those two fateful days he was certainly once at Southwell, and possibly more often.

The story of his last visit has a pathos of its own that we need not be Royalist to perceive. In March, 1646, the King at length saw his hopes to be desperately failing everywhere, even in the loyal West; garrisons of towns, castles, and fortified houses had been compelled to yield, and himself reduced to fleeting, the embarrassed head of an impossible cause, from place to place; bringing upon places and persons devoted to him a common ruin. Friends began to despair of his shifty and untrustworthy policy towards themselves and in negotiations with the enemy, and although their loyalty was hardly ever in doubt, for they were fighting, after all, not merely for the King personally, but for an order of things in which their interests were involved, they had by this time exhausted energies and wealth in a vain effort, and perhaps thought peace at almost any price to be by this time preferable to the uncertainties of civil war, in which the only certainty seemed to be that, whoever eventually won, they must needs in the meanwhile be continually making further sacrifices.

The King was at Oxford when he at length came to a decision by some means to end the struggle; by flight over sea, or by surrendering himself to the enemy: in the hope, in that

alternative, that the sanctity of Kingship would enable him by some means to snatch an advantage out of the very jaws of defeat and ruin. The first thought was to take flight from the country, by the port of King's Lynn, but that was at length abandoned for the idea—a fatal *tertium quid*, as it proved—of surrendering, not to the English army and the Parliament, but to the Scots, who, he thought, were likely to make better terms for him. The Scottish army was at that time engaged upon the siege of the Royalist castle of Newark, near Southwell ; and to Southwell the King, therefore, went from Oxford, in disguise. He left Oxford on April 26th, and, to the last incapable of being straightforward, even toward his own, gave out to his council that he was going to London, to treat with Parliament. On May 3rd he was at Stamford, and came to the “Saracen’s Head” at Southwell at seven o’clock in the morning of May 5th, accompanied by Ashburnham and his chaplain, Dr. Hudson, but travelling with them as Ashburnham’s servant. At the inn he was received by Montreuil, the French Ambassador to Scotland, who had been advised of his coming. The King, believing himself in every sense free, invited the Scottish Commissioners over to dinner at the inn, from the Bishop’s Palace, where they had their quarters ; and in what is now the Coffee Room, the negotiations took place that ended in the King’s yielding to the Scots. It would, in any case, have so ended, for the Commissioners came by invitation, as guests to dinner, but were so

astonished at finding the King so tamely coming within their grasp that they had not the remotest idea of letting him go again, and would, if needs were, have forcibly detained him. He was removed the same day to the neighbouring Kelham Hall, where he formed the richest prize and the bitterest source of contention between the English and the Scots, and all but caused a further warfare. Eventually, the Scottish Commissioners, true to the national love of money, sold their principles and their prisoner for £400,000 and withdrew themselves and their forces across the border. The story ends tragically, in Westminster, with the execution of the King on January 30th, 1649.

The Coffee Room of the “ Saracen’s Head ” is a beautiful apartment, formed out of two rooms, and rich in panelling and deeply recessed windows. The bedroom upstairs, where the King is said to have slept, is, in the same manner, formed by abolishing the partition that once made two rooms of it; and there they still show the pilgrims after things of sentimental and historic interest the ancient four-poster bed on which the King slept.

This history seems to have greatly upset Dr. Selwyn, Bishop of New Zealand and afterwards of Lichfield, who stayed at the “ Saracen’s Head ” in 1858, and slept—or rather, failed to sleep—in this historic bed. For my part, although a pilgrim—and a sentimental one at that—I found the four-poster, despite its associations, as inviting to

slumber as any other ; but then, I had cycled eighty-one miles that day, and—not being a bishop—had nothing on my conscience.

Dr. Selwyn was so obsessed with the memories of that room and the house that he arose in the middle of the night, and lighted his bedroom



KING CHARLES' BEDROOM, "SARACEN'S HEAD," SOUTHWELL.

candle and wrote a long set of couplets, sentimental, pietistic, and very jingly and inferior. I have a mental picture of him sitting up in bed, or perhaps at the dressing-table in his night-shirt, gruesomely cold on that March night, running his fingers through his hair and gazing at the ceiling for the inspiration which does not

seem to have come; for a more uninspired set of verses it would be difficult to find. But you shall judge:

I cannot rest—for on the spot where I have made my bed,  
O'erwearied with the strife of State, a King hath laid his  
head.

Thy sacred head, ill-fated Charles, hath lain where now I lie;  
And thou hast passed, in Southwell Inn, as sleepless night  
as I.

I cannot rest—for o'er my mind come thronging full and fast,  
The stories of the olden time, the visions of the past.

'Twas here he rested ere he raised his standard for the fight;  
Here ealled on Heaven to help his cause, My God, defend the  
right!

Here gather'd round him all the flow'r of England's chivalry;  
And here the vanquished Monarch closed his days of liberty.

I cannot rest—for Cromwell's horse are neighing in mine ear;  
E'en in the Holy House of God their ringing hoofs I hear.

Lord! wilt Thou once again endure it stable vile to be?  
The proud usurper's charger rein'd fast by Thy sanctuary.

I cannot rest—for Wolsey's pride, and Wolsey's deep dis-  
grace—  
The pomp, the littleness of man—speak from this ancient  
place.

Here gloriously his summer days he spent in kingly state;  
Here his last summer sadly pined, bow'd by the stroke of  
Fate.

How mighty was he when he rul'd from Tweed to Humber's  
flood!

How lowly when he eame to die, forsaken by his God!

I cannot rest—for holier thoughts the lingering night beguile,  
Of the glad days when gospel light went forth o'er Britain's  
Isle.

'Twas here the Bishop of the North, Paulinus, pitch'd his tent,

Here preached the living Word of God, baptizing in the Trent.

Hence have the preachers' feet gone forth thro' all the country wide;

And daughter-churches have sprung up, nursed at their mother's side.

Here have the clerks of Nottingham, and yeomen bold and true,

Held yearly feasts at Whitsuntide, and paid their homage due.

Here many a mitred head of York, and priests and men of peace,

Have lived in penitence and prayer, and welcomed their release.

And hence the daily choral song, the gospel's hopes and fears,

Have sounded forth to Christian hearts, beyond a thousand years.

'Tis thus, o'er England's hill and dale, have passed by Heaven's decree,

A changing light, a chequer'd shade, a mingled company.

The good, the bad, have had their day, the Lord hath worked His will;

And England keeps her ancient faith, purer and brighter still.

Where are they now, the famous men who lived in olden time?

They never see the noonday sun, nor hear the midnight chime.

They sleep within their narrow cell, waiting the trumpet's voice;

Lord! grant that I may rest in peace, and when I wake—rejoice.

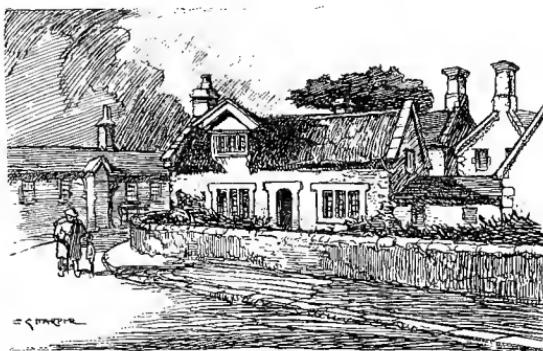
*Saracen's Head, Southwell, 5th March, 1858.*

Byron had stayed often at the inn, many years before, and in 1807 wrote an impromptu on the death of a local carrier, John Adams, who travelled to and from the house, and lived drunk and died drunk :

John Adams lies here, of the parish of Southwell,  
A *Carrier* who *carried* his can to his mouth well ;  
He *carried* so much and he *carried* so fast,  
He could *carry* no more—so was *carried* at last :  
For the liquor he drank, being too much for one,  
He could not *carry* off—so is now *carri-on*.

It will already have been noticed that the Stuarts and their troubles contributed most of the historic associations belonging to our old hostellries ; and we have not yet quite done with them. The incidents of Charles the Second's flight in 1651, after the battle of Worcester, include a halt of one night at the "Sun," Cirencester, the well-known escape from the "Queen's Arms," an inn—that is an inn no longer—at Charmouth, and visits to the "George" at Bridport, and a house of the same name at Broadwindsor. The "King's Arms" at Salisbury is associated with meetings and conferences of the King's supporters, who, while he lay in hiding at Heale House, considered there the best way of conducting him to the coast and safety. The route chosen lay through Mere, where, at the "George" inn (rebuilt in the eighteenth century) Colonel Phelips and Charles, travelling as his servant, Will Jackson, called. The Colonel, an acquaintance of the landlord, descended into the cellar of the inn, to sample the liquors of the

house, while "Will Jackson" stood respectfully aside. Mine host, however, was an hospitable man, and, turning to the servant, with jug and glass, said, "Thou lookest an honest fellow—here's a health to the King!" The "honest fellow," whether taken aback by the suddenness of it, or acting an unwilling part, made some difficulty in replying; whereupon the landlord mildly took the



THE "COCK AND PYMAT."

Colonel to task for the kind of man he had brought.

From another "George"—the "George" at Brighthelmstone, in after years styled the "King's Head"—the King escaped to France.

Nor even yet have we quite done with the hapless Stuarts, of whom undoubtedly Charles the Second was the most fortunate.

One of the most historic of inns was the famous "Cock and Pymat" at Whittington, near Chesterfield. It is now only to be spoken of in the past tense because, although there is still an inn of

that name at Whittington, it is not the famous “Revolution House” itself, but only a modern building to which the old sign of the “Cock and Magpie”—for that is the plain English of “Pymat”—has been transferred.

Whittington in these times is a very grim and unlovely village, in the dismal colliery district of Chesterfield, whose wicked-looking crooked spire gives an air of *diablerie* to its immediate surroundings; but two centuries and a quarter ago, when James the Second was on the throne, and busily engaged in undermining the religious and Parliamentary liberties of the realm, it was a tiny collection of houses on a lonely moor, and an ideal place for meetings of conspirators. There and then those very mild and constitutional plotters who, despite their mildness, did actually succeed in overturning that already insecure monarch, met and formulated their demands.

The house in which they gathered was then an inn so noted for its fine home-brewed ale that pack-men and others made it a regular place of call, and often, we are told, went considerable distances out of their way, rather than miss a draught of the genuine Whittington nut-brown.

The bold men who met in the room still known as the “Plotting Parlour” had nothing in common with such plotters as Guy Fawkes. Their methods were rather those of debating societies than of misguided persons with dark lanthorns and slow matches; but those were times when even the mildest debater who ever rose to a point of order

would have been in danger of his life ; and so undoubtedly the little gathering that met here in 1688—William, fourth Earl of Devonshire, Sir Thomas Osborne, Earl of Danby, afterwards Duke of Leeds, and John D'Arcy—were bold men and brave.

They drew up a complaint, moderately worded, and appended to it a sturdy resolution. They declared that “invasions had been made of late Years on our Religion and Laws, without the consent of Parliament, freely and duly chosen,” and begged King James to grant again the constitutional right, hardly won by our forefathers, of a free Parliament. “But,” they added, “if, to the great Misfortune and Ruin of these Kingdoms it prove otherwise, we further declare that we will to our utmost defend the Protestant religion, the Laws of the Kingdom, and the Rights and Liberties of the People.”

The Stuarts, although a romantic, were a wrong-headed and a stiff-necked race. They must needs for ever be trying conclusions with their stubborn heads against every brick wall within reach, and would never bow before the storms of their own raising. James, true to his blood, would no more yield than would any other of his house ; and in that same year came the Prince of Orange and brushed him lightly aside.

The chair in which the Earl (afterwards Duke) of Devonshire presided at the “Cock and Pymat” was long since transferred to Hardwick Hall, and in the course of years the greater part of the old

inn was demolished, the remaining portion being now a private house.

The porch of that chief hotel of High Wycombe, the "Red Lion," has become in these last generations historic ; but while we may find, throughout the country, inns associated with the entirely fictitious incidents of novels displaying



PORCH OF THE "RED LION," HIGH WYCOMBE.

notices of their fame, there is not yet even the most modest of tablets affixed to the front of the "Red Lion," to inform the present generation that from the roof of the projecting portico Benjamin Disraeli, afterwards Prime Minister of England, made his first political speech. Thrice, and every time unsuccessfully—twice in 1832,

and in 1834—he sought to enter Parliament as Member for this town. He made a public entry on June 3rd, 1832, and spoke from beside the lion that, still very red and fierce, stands to this day on the roof of the portico. He appeared there in the dandified costume of his youth—tightly strapped trousers, frock-coat very tight in the waist and very full and spreading in the skirts—and made a picturesque figure as, in the excitement of his harangue to the free and independent electors, he from time to time flung back the long black curls of his luxuriant hair. Mr. D'Israeli—as he then spelled his name—appeared as an independent candidate, and was proposed by a Tory and seconded by a Radical. He polled little more than half the number of votes cast for his opponent, and how small was the electorate in those days of a restricted franchise we may see from this election return :

Grey	23
D'Israeli	12
<hr/>	
Majority	11

Among inns of highly dubious historic associations may be mentioned the “White Hart” at Somerton, Somerset: that gaunt and cold-looking town built of the local grey-blue limestone that so utterly destroys the summery implication of the place-name.

The inn claims to have been partly built of the stones of Somerton Castle, and a tiny opening,

about the size of a poeket-handkerehief, in the gable of the small and not otherwise particullarly interesting house, is pointed out as the window of "King John's Prison." The "King John" in question was not our own shabby and lying Laekland, but an infinitely finer fellow—if one may so greatly dare as to name a king a "fellow"—King



THE "WHITE HART," SOMERTON.

John of Franee, taken prisoner at the battle of Poietiers and held to ransom in England. But there appears to be a considerable deal of confusion in the statement that the French King was ever in custody in Somersetshire, for it was from the Castle of Hertford to Somerton Castle in Lincolnshire that he was removed, for greater

security, in 1359. But those grave authorities, the county histories of Somerset and Lincolnshire, alike claim to have had the custody of that illustrious prisoner, in the 33rd year of Edward the Third, at their respective Somertons, and the antiquaries of either narrate how one Sir Saier de Rochford was granted two shillings a day for the keeping of him.

Apart from this unfounded claim, the “White Hart” is pictorially remarkable for its White Hart effigy, of an enormous size in proportion to that of the house.

## CHAPTER IX

### INNS OF OLD ROMANCE

ROMANCE, as we have already seen, was enacted in many ways in the inns of long ago. Love and hatred, comedy and tragedy, and all the varied moods by which human beings are swayed, have had their part beneath the roofs of the older hostelrys ; as how could they fail to do in those times when the inn was so essential and intimate a part of the national life ? The romantic incidents in which old inns have their part are in two great divisions : that of old folklore, and the other of real life. To the realm of folk-tales belongs the story told of an ancient hostelry that stood on the site of the “Ostrich,” Colnbrook.

The decayed coaching town of Colnbrook, in Middlesex, seventeen miles from Hyde Park Corner, on the great road to Bath, is little changed from the time when the coaches ceased running through it, seventy years ago. Still do the old red-brick houses on either side of the narrow, causeway-like street wear their seventeenth, their eighteenth, or their early nineteenth-century look unchanged, and the solid, stolid red-faced “George” inn yet seems to be awaiting the arrival of the mail, or of some smart post-chaise

nearing London or setting out on the second stage of the  $105\frac{3}{4}$  miles to Bath.

Colnbrook is perhaps the best illustration of a coaching town ruined by railways that it is possible to discover, and certainly the nearest to London. How great its fall since those prosperous days of 1549, when it was incorporated as a market-town! Its charter was renewed in 1632, and, judging from the many houses in its narrow street built about 1700—1750, the prosperity of the place survived unimpaired for certainly considerably over another century. It is now merely a village, but, as a result of its former highway importance, still a place of inns. There are at least ten even now surviving; and it is quite safe to assume that any important-looking old house, now in private occupation, facing the long thoroughfare, was once a hostelry.

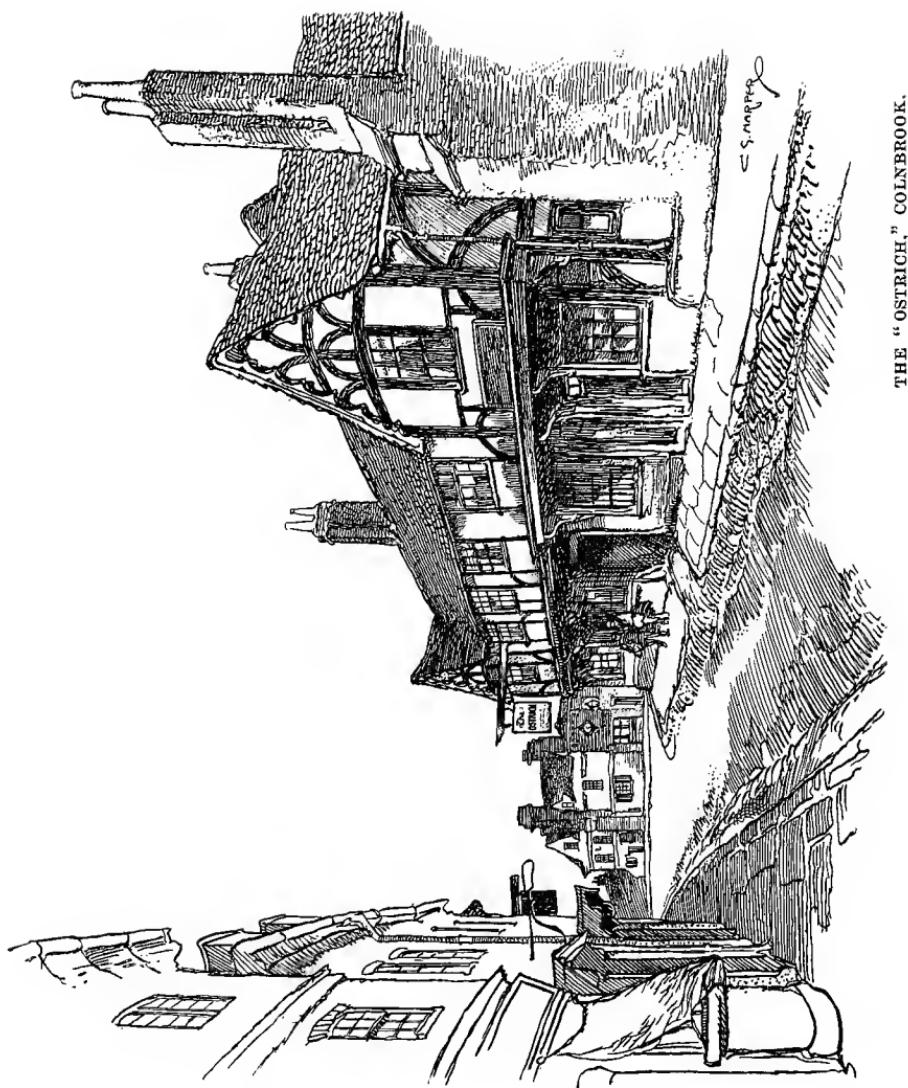
The "George," already mentioned, although re-fronted at some period of the eighteenth century, is older within, and an old gable overlooking the stable yard even has a sixteenth-century barge-board surviving. Of rather more human interest is the decorative and spiky iron-work fixed on the ground-floor window-sills of the frontage, which clearly shows that the architect of the building, when he drew out his design, had forgotten the loungers of Colnbrook, and, in placing his sills at the height above the ground of the average chair, had unwittingly provided the lazy with seats in the most advantageous position. Hence the after-thought of the decorative but penetrative ironwork.

But the oldest and most interesting building in Colnbrook is the “Ostrich” inn, whose long, gabled timber-and-plaster front, now partly divided up into shops and tenements, is clearly of Elizabethan date. It is picturesque, rambling, shabby outside, and shabby and darkling within, and the most satisfactory part of it is without doubt the little courtyard through the archway, where, turning round on the cobble-stones, you get a picturesque and a sunny view of steep roofs, dormer windows, dove-cot, and white-washed walls covered with grape-vines.

The present “Ostrich” is the successor of a much more ancient inn. There have been, in fact, several inns on this site. The first appears to have been a guest-house, or hospice—“*quoddam hospitium in viâ Londoniæ apud Colebroc*”—founded by one Milo Crispin, and given, in 1106, in trust to the Abbey of Abingdon, for the good of travellers in this world and the salvation of his soul in the next.

It would seem to be from this circumstance that the inn obtained its name, for it was early known as the “Ospridge,” a kind of orthographic half-way house between the former “hospice” and the present “Ostrich.”

If we may believe the old chroniclers’ statements—and there is no reason why we should not—the house became in after years a place of resort for guests going to and from Windsor Castle; and here the ambassadors robed themselves before being conducted the last few miles, and so



THE "OSTRICH," COLNBRook.



into the Royal presence. Froissart chronicles four ambassadors to Edward the Third dining with the King: "So they dyned in the Kyng's chamber, and after they departed, lay the same night at Colbrook."

How it happened that the inn kept its customers after the dreadful murders traditionally said to have been committed here by wholesale in the reign of Henry the First, certainly not fifty years after the hospice was given to Abingdon Abbey, there is no explaining. The ancient pamphlets that narrate the Sweeny Todd-like particulars do not enlighten us on that head.

The undiluted horror of the whole thing is exceedingly revolting, and one would rather not give a further lease of life to it, but that in an account of Old Inns their unpleasing story must needs be set forth, in company with their lighter legends. Moreover, the late sixteenth-century romance of *Thomas of Reading*, in which the story occurs, is by way of being a classic. It was written, probably in 1598, by one Thomas Delaney, and is a lengthy narrative of a wealthy clothier of that name, otherwise Thomas Cole. Characterised variously as "a fabulous and childish history," and as "a mixture of historical fact and fictitious narrative," it was, at any rate, a highly successful publication, for by 1632 it had reached its sixth edition, and eventually was circulated, broadcast, as a penny chap-book.

According to this "pleasant and famous historie," there was once upon a time, in the days

of Henry the First, one Thomas Cole, a wealthy clothier of Reading, who was used frequently to travel on his business between that town and London. Commonly he journeyed in company with two intimate clothier friends, Gray of Gloucester and William of Worcester. He himself was a worshipful man, of honesty and great wealth, and was usually known as Thomas of Reading. The three would usually dine at the "Ostrich" on the way to London, and on the return sleep there. We are asked to believe that this business man, Thomas Cole, on such occasions gave the money he carried into the care of the landlady overnight, and that by this misplaced confidence he was marked down for destruction.

Jarman, the innkeeper, and his wife had long been engaged in what is rather delicately styled the "systematic removal" of wealthy guests, and had devised an ingenious murder-trap in the principal bedroom, by which the bed, firmly secured to a trap-door, was in the dead of night, when the house resounded to the intended victim's snoring, plunged suddenly into a huge copper filled with boiling water, placed in the room below. He was then "polished off," as Sweeny Todd himself would say, and should it happen that other guests of the night before asked after the missing one, they would be told that he had taken horse early and gone away.

The victim's horse would be taken to a distance and disguised, his clothes destroyed, his

body thrown into the Colne, or into the Thames at Wraysbury, and his money added to the fortune mine host and his wife were thus rapidly acquiring.

As Thomas Cole had business in London more frequently than his friends, it naturally followed that he sometimes went alone. On the first such occasion he was, according to the author of this “pleasant historie,” “appointed to be the fat pig that should be killed: For it is to be understood that when they plotted the murder of any man, this was alwaies their terme, the man to his wife, and the woman to her husband: ‘Wife, there is now a fat pig to be had if you want one.’ Whereupon she would answer thus: ‘I pray you put him in the hogstie till to-morrow.’”

He was accordingly given the room—the condemned cell, so to speak—above the copper, and by next morning would doubtless have been floating inanimate down the Thames, had not his friend Gray unexpectedly joined him in the evening. On another occasion his hour was nearly come, when Colnbrook was aroused at night by people riding post-haste from London with news that all Chepe was ablaze; and he must needs be up and away without sleeping, for he had interests there.

The innkeeper was wrathy at these mischances; “but,” said he, in a phrase even yet heard, “the third time will pay for all.”

Yet again the threatened clothier came riding alone, but in the night he was roused by the

innkeeper himself to help quiet a riotous dispute that had arisen in the house over dice.

On another occasion he fell ill while staying at the “Ostrich,” or the “Crane,” as some accounts name the house, and had to be nursed; but the fifth time was fatal. Omens pursued him on that occasion, and many another would have turned back. His horse stumbled and broke a leg, and he had to find another, and when he had done so and had resumed his journey, he was so sleepy he could scarce sit in the saddle. Then, as he drew near Colnbrook, his nose began to bleed.

The happenings of the day depressed him when at last he had come to the inn. He could take nothing, and the innkeeper and his wife remarked upon it.

“Jesu, Master Cole,” quoth they, “what ails ye to-night? Never before did we see you thus sad. Will it please you to have a quart of burnt sack?”

“Willingly,” he rejoined; but presently lapsed into his former mood.

“I have but one child in the world,” said he, “and that is my daughter, and half that I have is hers and the other half my wife’s. But shall I be good to nobody but them? In conscience, my wealth is too much for a couple to possess, and what is our religion without charity? And to whom is charity more to be shown than to decayed householders? Tom Dove, through his love of jollity and good-fellowship, hath lost his all.

Good my Oast, lend me a pen and inke, for straightway I will write a letter vnto the poore man, and something I will give him. God knows how long I shall live."

"Why, Master Cole," said the innkeeper, when shown what the clothier had written, "'tis no letter, but a will you have written."

"'Tis true," said Cole, "and I have but written that which God put into my mind." Then, folding and sealing it, he desired his host to despatch it, and was not satisfied until he himself had hired the carrier. Then he fell a-weeping, and so went to bed, to the accompaniment of many other dolorous signs and portents. "The scritch-owle cried piteously, and anon after the night-rauen sate croaking hard by the window. 'Jesu have mercy vpon me,' quoth hee, 'what an ill-favoured cry doe yonder carrion birds make ;' and there-upon he laid him down in his bed, from whence he neuer rose againe."

The innkeeper also was shaken by these ominous things, and would have spared his guest; but his wife was of other mettle.

"What," said she, "faint you now?"—and showed him the gold that had been given into her care.

In the end they served the unfortunate Cole as they had many another, and threw his body into the little river that runs near by : hence, according to the old accounts, the name of the place, originally Cole-in-brook !

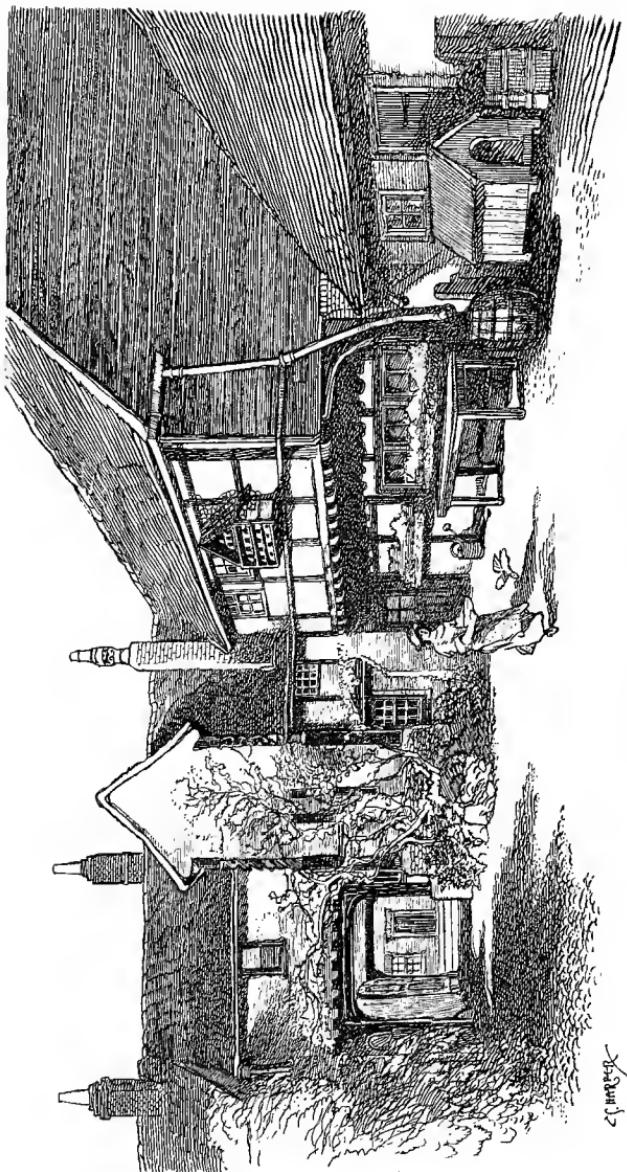
This last ridiculous, infantile touch is sufficient

to discredit the whole story, and when we learn that, according to one account thirteen, and by the testimony of another no fewer than sixty, travellers had been, in like manner, "removed," we are inclined to believe the whole thing the invention of some anonymous, bloody-minded pamphleteer, and care little whether the innkeeper and his wife were hanged (as we are told) or retired with a fortune and founded a family.

At any rate, one cannot understand the persistent attempt to connect the so-called "Blue Room" of the present house with the fatal bedroom. If there is any truth at all in the story of Master Cole, his tragical ending was accomplished in a house demolished eight hundred years ago; for we have it, in the words of the writer of *Thomas of Reading*, that "the King (Henry the First) commanded the house should be quite consumed with fire and that no man should ever build vpon that cursed ground."

In the same manner, the recent attempts to connect Turpin with the "Ostrich" will not bear the least investigation.

This ghastly story claimed, with such extraordinary zeal, by the "Ostrich" is by no means the only one of its kind, for many an old tale of horror has for its central feature the wicked innkeeper who robbed and murdered his guests. The most famous, and most revolting, legend is that included in the career of St. Nicholas of Myra, which serves to show that this licensed-victualling depravity was international. The true story of



YARD OF THE "OSTRICH," COLN BROOK.



St. Nicholas is not miraculous, and is simply earnest of his good and pitiful nature. He entreated, and secured from Eustathius, governor of Myra, the pardon of three men imprisoned in a tower and condemned to die, and is often represented with a tower at the side of him and three mannikins rising out of it. In the course of time the tower became a tub, and the little men were changed into children, and those changes in their turn gave rise to a wholly fictitious story that fairly outranges all the other incredible marvels of the dark ages. According to this tale, an inn-keeper, running short of bacon, seized three little boys, cut them up, and pickled them in a salting-tub. St. Nicholas, hearing that they had gone to the inn and had disappeared there, had his saintly suspicions aroused. He asked for the pickle-tub, addressed it in some form of words that unfortunately have not been preserved to us, and straightway the fragments sorted themselves out, and pieced themselves together, and the children went off to play.

A curious feature of the old frontage of the "Ostrich" was the doorway made in coaching times in the upper storey for the convenience of passengers, who were in this manner enabled to step directly into the house from the roofs of the coaches. There are those still living who remember this contrivance; but the space has long been filled in, and the sole vestige of it is an unobtrusive wooden sill resting on the timbering beneath the swinging sign.

Romance, very dark and gory, clothes the memory of the "Blue Boar" at Leicester, a house unfortunately pulled down in the 30's of the nineteenth century. According to tradition, Richard the Third, coming to Leicester and finding the castle already dilapidated, stayed at the inn before the battle of Bosworth, and slept in the huge oaken four-poster bed which remained in the house until the date of its demolition. It was not only a bed, but also a treasure-chest, for in the time of one Clark, who kept the house in the later years of Queen Elizabeth and the earlier part of the reign of James the First, a great store of gold coin was discovered in the framework of it. Mrs. Clark, making up the bed hastily, shook it with more than usual vigour, when, to her surprise, a gold coin dropped out. Examination led to the discovery that the bedstead had a false bottom and that the space between was one vast cash-box. Clark did not at the time disclose the find, and so became "mysteriously" rich. In the course of a few years he was gathered to his fathers, and his widow kept on the house, but was murdered in 1613 for the sake of her gold by a maidservant, who, together with no fewer than seven men accomplices, was duly hanged for the crime.

The difficulty of resolving tradition into fact, of putting a date to legends and tracing them to their origin, is generally insurmountable. Let us take, for example, the "Old White Swan," at "Piff's Elm." Casting a roving eye upon the



"PIFF'S ELM."



map of Gloucestershire, I see by chance, between Tewkesbury and Gloucester, a place so named. It tells me vaguely of romance, and I resolve, at all hazards, to go to that spot and sketch, if sketchable, the inn I suspect to be there, and note the story that belongs, or should belong, to it. In due course I come to that lonely place, and there, to be sure, is an inn—once a considerable house on the old coaching and posting route between Cheltenham and Tewkesbury—and not only an inn, but a picturesque one, fronted with the giant stump of an elm—whether Piff's or another's, who shall say?

And Piff himself? Whether he was a highwayman or was murdered by a highwayman; or if he were a suicide who hanged himself from the elm associated with him, or a criminal gibbeted there, I cannot tell you, nor can any one else. Some stories say one thing, some another, and others still put quite different complexions upon it. In that choice of legends lurks romance itself, perhaps reduced from the highest realms of tragedy by the unfortunately farcical name of the mysterious Piff.

Equally romantic, and irreducible to cold-drawn fact, is the legend of King James and the Tinker, associated with the "King and Tinker" inn at White Webbs Lane, in what was once Enfield Chase. According to the tale, King James the First, hunting in the woodlands that surrounded his palace of Theobalds, lost himself, and, drawing rein at the inn—whatever then was

the sign of it—encountered a tinker drinking a modest stoup of ale in the porch.

“What news, good fellow?” asked the horseman.

“No news that I wot of,” replied the tinker, “save that they say the King’s out a-hunting in the Chase to-day. I should like to see the King, although I suppose he’s very much like other folk.”

“So you’d like to see the King?” queried his Majesty.

“Ay, just for the sake of saying so,” replied the tinker.

“Mount behind me, then,” said the King, “and I will show you him.”

“But how shall I know him when I see him?”

“Easily enough. You will know him by his remaining covered.”

Soon the King came upon his retinue, all of whom promptly bared their heads. “Now, my friend, where is the King?” asked his Majesty, turning, with a smile, in his saddle.

“There’s only we two covered, and since I know I’m no king, I—O! pardon, your Majesty!” replied the now trembling tinker.

The King laughed. “Now,” said he, “since you have seen how a King looks, you shall also see how he acts,” and then, drawing his sword, he knighted the tinker on the spot; or, in the words of the brave old ballad:

“Come, tell me thy name.” “I am John of the Dale,  
A mender of kettles, and fond of good ale.”—

“Then rise up, Sir John, for I’ll honour thee here,—  
I make thee a Knight of five hundred a year!”

Well may the mark of exclamation stand there, not only at the general improbability of such a thing, but at the preposterous idea of the niggard James the First being guilty of an act of unreasonable generosity. But one must not question the legend at the "King and Tinker," where it is devoutly cherished. I have before me a four-page pamphlet, issued at the inn, wherein the ancient ballad is printed at length and surmounted, not very convincingly, by a woodblock in the Bewick manner, showing a number of sportsmen in the costume of George the Third's time, about, in a most unsportsmanlike way, to ride over the hounds. In the distance is Windsor Castle. It will be conceded that, as an illustration of the King James and the Tinker legend, this is lacking in some of those intimate touches that would make the incident live again.

But the legend and the ballad are much older than the days of James the First. They are, in fact, to be found, on substantially the same lines, in most centuries and many countries. Haroun-al-Raschid is found, in the *Arabian Nights*, in circumstances not dissimilar; while the story of Henry the Second—or, as some versions have it, Henry the Eighth—and the Miller of Mansfield is another familiar parallel. There again we find the King riding away in the forest from his courtiers, only in that instance it is the Forest of Sherwood. He is given shelter by the miller, and shares a bed with the miller's son, Dick. Next morning the agitated courtiers discover the

King, who knights his host, "Sir John Cockle," and eventually names him ranger of Sherwood, with a salary of £300.

From romance of this almost fairy-tale kind let us turn to the equally astonishing, but better established, story associated with the once-famed "Pelican" at Speenhamland, on the outskirts of Newbury. The Peerage, which has long appeared to exist almost exclusively for the purpose of scandalising staid folk by the amazing marriages of its members, included in 1744 a Duke of Chandos; Henry Brydges, the second Duke, at that time a widower. He and a friend, dining at the "Pelican" on their way from Bath to London in that year, were interrupted by an unwonted excitement that appeared to be agitating the establishment. Inquiring the cause, they were told that a man was about to sell his wife in the inn yard. "Let us go and see," quoth the Duke; and they accordingly went forth into the courtyard and saw a handsome, modest-looking young woman enter, in the approved manner, with a halter round her neck, and led by her husband, who is described as a "brutal ostler."

It was a remarkable instance of love at first sight. The name of this fortunate young woman was Ann Wells. The Duke bought her (the price is not stated) and married her on Christmas Day. She died in 1757, at Keynsham, near Bristol, leaving an only daughter, Lady Augusta, who married a Mr. Kearney.

There remained until recent times a funeral hatchment in Keynsham Church on which the arms of this greatly daring Duke were impaled with those found by the Herald's College for his plebeian wife: "three fountains (for 'Wells') on a field azure."

## CHAPTER X

### PICKWICKIAN INNS

WHAT visions of Early Victorian good-fellowship and conviviality, of the roast-beef and rum-punch kind, are called up by the title ! The Pickwickian Inn was, in the '30's of the nineteenth century, the last word in hospitable comfort, and its kitchen achieved the topmost pinnacle of culinary refinement demanded by an age that was robust rather than refined, whose appetites were gross rather than discriminating, and whose requirements seem to ourselves, of a more sybarite and exacting generation, few and modest. The Pickwickian age was an age of prodigious performances in eating and drinking, and our ancestors of that time, so only they had great joints, heaped-up dishes, and many bottles and decanters set before them, cared comparatively little about delicate flavours. The chief aim was to get enough, and the "enough" of our great-grandfathers would nowadays be a surfeit to ourselves. If it were not then quite the essential mark of a jolly good fellow to be carried up to bed at the end of an evening with the punch and the old port, a man who shirked his drink was looked upon with astonishment, almost suspicion, and the only use

in those deep-drinking days and nights for table-waters was to help a man along the road to recovery, after "a night of it."

Then to be otherwise than of a Pickwickian rotundity was to be not merely a poor creature, but generally connoted some mental crook or eccentricity ; while fatness and hearty good-nature were thought of almost as interchangeable terms.

'Twas ever thus. Even Shakespeare loved the well-larded, and makes Julius Cæsar, who himself was sufficiently lean, say :

Let me have men about me that are fat ;  
Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep o' nights :  
Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look :  
He thinks too much : such men are dangerous.

In the time of Dickens they were still suspect ; and when at last Wilkie Collins made his villainous Count Fosco a fat villain, the new departure seemed to that generation a wanton, extravagant flying in the face of nature.

There are even yet to be found substantial old inns something after the Pickwickian ideal, but they are few and far between, and they are none of them Pickwickian to the core. Rarely do you see nowadays the monumental sideboards, with the almost equally monumental sirloins of beef and the like, and even the huge cheese, last of the old order of things to survive upon these tables, is nowadays generally represented by a modest wedge.

It is true that even the Pickwickians did not

always happen upon well-ordered inns, for the “Great White Horse” at Ipswich was severely criticised by Dickens; but such exceptions do but serve to prove the Dickensian rule, that there was no such place, and there never had been any such place, as the hostelry of the coaching age for creature-comforts and good service. Dickens had already, when he began writing *The Pickwick Papers* at the age of twenty-five, an almost encyclopaedic knowledge of inns, especially of country inns. It was, like his own Mr. Weller’s knowledge of London, “extensive and peculiar.” His fount of information about country inns, at any rate, was acquired at an early and receptive age, in his many and hurried journeys as a reporter, when, on behalf of *The Morning Chronicle*, he flew—flew, that is to say, as flying was then metaphorically understood, at an average rate of something under ten miles an hour—by coach, east, west, north, and south, in the capacity of Parliamentary reporter, despatched to “take” the flow of eloquence from Members, or would-be Members of Parliament, addressing the conventionally “free and enlightened” voters of the provinces.

No fewer than fifty-five inns, taverns, etc., London and provincial, are named in *Pickwick*, many of them at considerable length; but, so great and sweeping have been the changes of the last seventy years, only twelve now remain. The London houses, with the exception of Osborne’s Hotel, John Street, Adelphi—now the “Adelphi”

Hotel—and the “George and Vulture,” in George Yard, Lombard Street—in these days almost better known as Thomas’s Restaurant—have been either utterly disestablished or remodelled beyond all knowledge.

*Pickwick* is the very *Odyssey* of inns and travel. You reach the second chapter and are whirled away at once from London by the “Commodore” coach, starting from the “Golden Cross,” Charing Cross, for Rochester, and only cease your travels and adventures at inns in Chapter LI., near the end of the story. Meanwhile you have coasted over a very considerable portion of England with the Pickwickians: from Rochester and Ipswich on the east, to Bath and Bristol on the west, and as far as Birmingham and Coventry in the Midlands.

He who would write learnedly and responsibly on the subject of Pickwickian Inns must bring to his task a certain amount of foreknowledge, and must add to that equipment by industry and research—and even then he shall find himself, after all, convicted of errors and inadequacies; for indeed, although the Pickwickians began their travels no longer ago than 1827, the changes in topography for one thing, and in manners and customs for another, are so great that it needs a scientific historian to be illuminating on the subject.

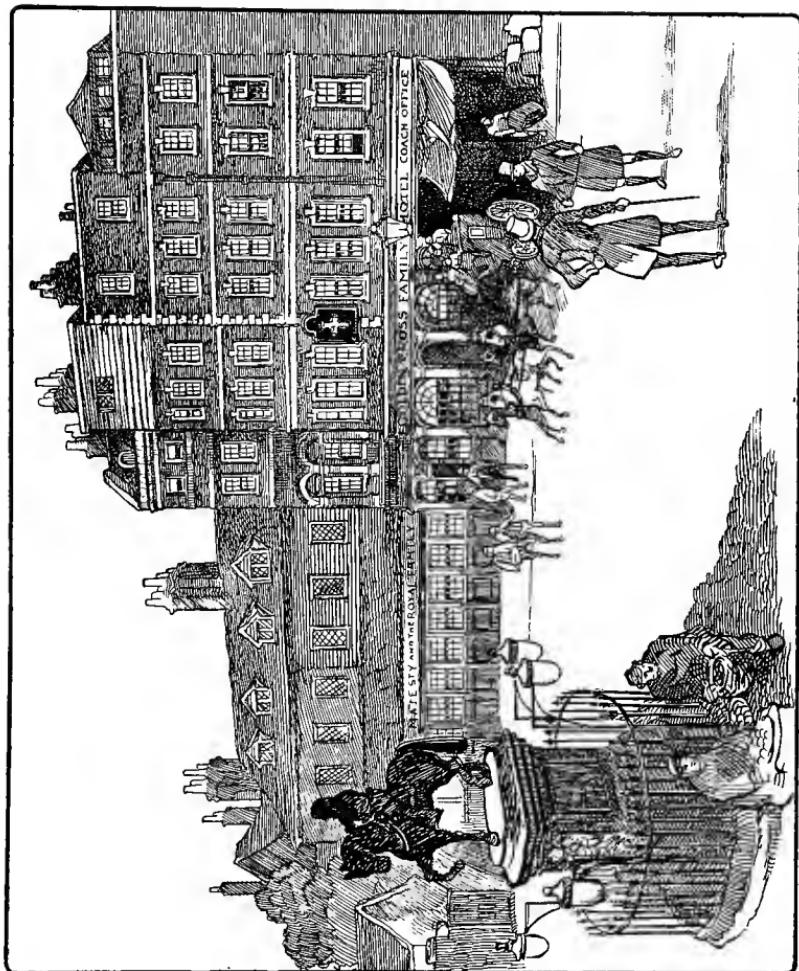
To begin at the usual place, the beginning, the history of the “Golden Cross,” the famous inn whence the Pickwickians started, offers a fine series

of snares, pitfalls, traps, and rocks of offence to him who does not walk warily, for the “Golden Cross” of to-day, although a coaching inn remodelled, is by no means the original of that name, and indeed stands on quite a different (although neighbouring) site.

Changes in the geography of London have been so continuous, so intricate, and so puzzling that few people at once realise how the inn can have stood until 1830 at the rear of King Charles the First’s statue, on the spot now occupied by the south-eastern one of the four lions guarding the Nelson Column.

At that time Charing Cross was still the narrow junction of streets seen in Shepherd’s illustration, where the “Golden Cross” inn is prominent on the left hand, and Northumberland House, the London palace of the Dukes of Northumberland (pulled down in 1874), more prominent on the right. The block of buildings, including the “Golden Cross,” was removed, in 1830, to form part of the open space of Trafalgar Square, and the site of the ducal mansion is now Northumberland Avenue.

There had long been a “Golden Cross” inn here: how long we do not know, but a house of that name was in existence in 1643, for in that year we find the Puritans demanding the removal of the, to them, offensive sign of the cross. It was then a half-way house at the little village of Charing, midway between the then entirely separate and distinct cities of London and



THE "GOLDEN CROSS," IN PICKWICKIAN DAYS.



Westminster. In front of it, on the site of King Charles's statue, stood the ancient cross of Charing, erected, long centuries before, to the memory of Queen Eleanor.

The earliest picture we have of the "Golden Cross" inn is a view by Canaletti, engraved in 1753, showing a sign projecting boldly over the footpath. As the architectural style of the house shown in that view is later than that prevailing in the reign of Charles the First, the inn must obviously have been rebuilt at least once in the interval. This building is again illustrated in a painting executed certainly later than 1770, according to the evidence of the sign, which, instead of the old gallows sign in Canaletti's picture, is replaced by a board fixed against the front of the building, in obedience to the Acts of Parliament, 1762-70, forbidding overhanging signs in London. That such measures were necessary had been made abundantly evident so early as 1718, when a heavy sign had fallen in Bride Lane, Fleet Street, tearing down the front of the house and killing four persons.

In this view, later than 1770, and probably executed about 1800, we have the "Golden Cross" inn of *Pickwick*. Its successor, the Gothic-fronted building generally associated by Dickens commentators with that story, was built in 1828 and demolished two years later. Dickens wrote *Pickwick* in 1836: when both the house he indicated and its successor were swept away, and the very site cleared and made a part of the open road;

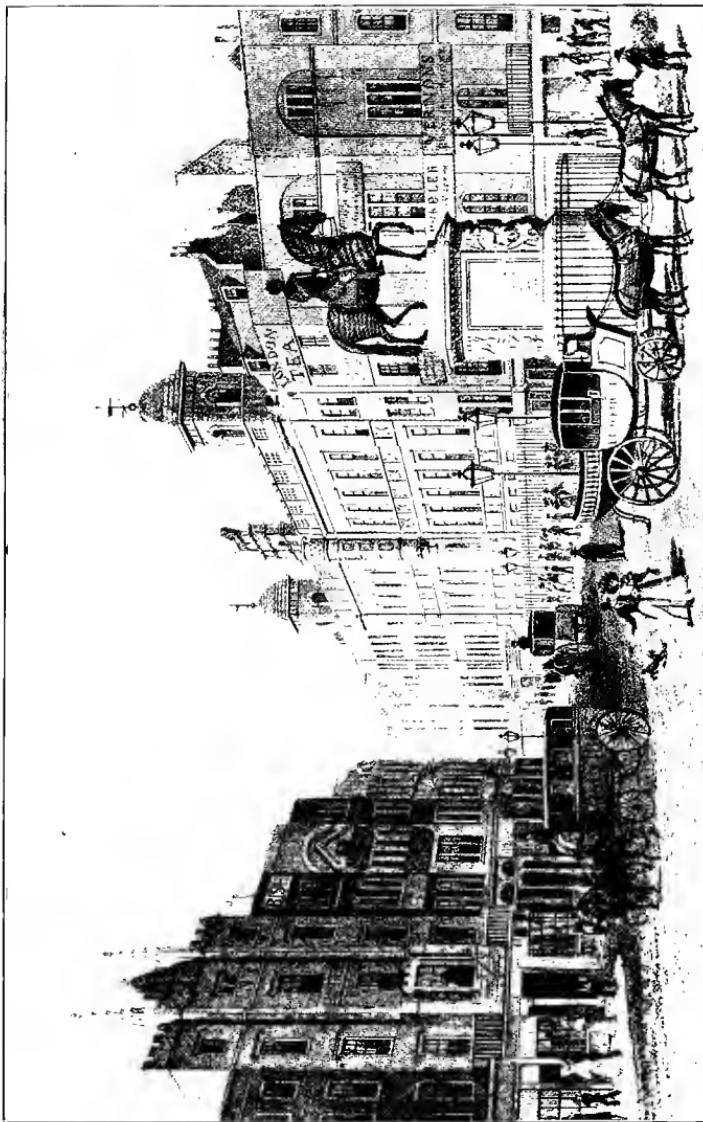
but, as he specifically states that the *Pickwickians* began their travels on May 13th, 1827, it must needs have been the predecessor of the Gothic building from which they set forth on the “Commodoore” coach for Rochester.

The inn at that time had a hospitable-looking front and a really handsome range of coffee-room windows looking out upon the street. Beside them you see the celebrated archway of *Jingle’s* excited and disjointed cautions: “Terrible place—dangerous work—other day—five children—mother—tall lady, eating sandwiches—forgot the arch—crash—knock—children look round—mother’s head off—sandwich in her hand—no mouth to put it in—head of a family off—shocking, shocking !”

The great stable-yard and the back premises probably remained untouched, for when *David Copperfield* came up by coach from Canterbury, the “Golden Cross” was, we learn, “a mouldy sort of establishment,” and his bedroom “smelt like a hackney-coach, and was shut up like a family vault”—characteristics not generally associated with new buildings.

But, indeed, although references to the “Golden Cross” are plentiful in literature, they are few of them flattering: “A nasty inn, remarkable for filth and apparent misery,” wrote *Edward Shergold*, early in the nineteenth century, and he was but one of a cloud of witnesses to the same effect. It is thus a little difficult to understand a writer in *The Epicure’s Almanack* for 1815, who says, in the commendatory way, that





CHARING CROSS, ABOUT 1829, SHOWING THE "GOLDEN CROSS" INN.

*From the engraving after T. Hosmer Shepherd.*

the fame of the “Golden Cross” had spread “from the Pillars of Hercules to the Ganges; from Nova Scotia to California.”

At that period this was the chief booking-office for coaches in the West End of London, and it was to that quarter what the “Bull and Mouth” was to the City. To that commanding position it had been raised by William Horne, who came here from the “White Horse” in Fetter Lane, in 1805. He died in 1828, and was succeeded by his son, the great coach-proprietor, Benjamin Worthy Horne, who further improved the property, and was powerful enough to command respect at the councils of the early railways. Under his rule, beneath the very shadow of the Charing Cross Improvement Act, by whose provisions Trafalgar Square was ordained and eventually created, the house was rebuilt, with a frontage in the Gothic manner. Shepherd’s view of Charing Cross, published December 18th, 1830, shows this immediate successor of the Pickwickian inn very clearly, with, next door, the establishment of Bish, for whose lotteries Charles Lamb was employed to write puffs.

When the Commissioners of Woods and Forests, who had the Charing Cross improvement in charge, cleared the ground, the inn migrated to the new building, some distance eastwards, the present “Golden Cross,” 452, West Strand, which, like the whole of the West Strand, in the Nash, stucco-classic manner, was designed in 1832, by Mr. (afterwards Sir William) Tite.

Maginn lamented these changes, in the verses “An Excellent New Ballad ; being entitled a Lamentation on the Golden Cross, Charing Cross”:

No more the coaches shall I see  
    Come trundling from the yard,  
Nor hear the horn blown cheerily  
    By brandy-bibbing guard.  
King Charles, I think, must sorrow sore,  
    Even were he made of stone,  
When left by all his friends of yore  
    (Like Tom Moore’s rose) alone.

O ! London won’t be London long,  
    For ‘twill be all pulled down ;  
And I shall sing a funeral song  
    O’er that time-honoured town.

According to a return made to Parliament of the expenses in connection with these street improvements, “10 Houses and the Golden Cross Inn, Stable Yards, &c.,” were purchased for £108,884 4s. ; the inn itself apparently, if we are to believe a statement in *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, 1831, with three houses in St. Martin’s Lane and two houses and workshops in Frontier Court, costing £30,000 of that sum.

The present building was planned with a courtyard, and had archways to the Strand and to Duncannon Street. The last remains, and is in use as a railway receiving-office, but the Strand archway, the principal entrance, was built up and abolished in 1851.

The first house to which Mr. Pickwick and his followers—the amorous Tupman, Winkle the



THE "GOLDEN CROSS," SUCCESSOR OF THE PICKWICKIAN INN,  
AS REBUILT 1828.



sportsman, and the poetic Snodgrass—came at the close of their first day's travel is still in being. I name the “Bull” at Rochester, which long ago adopted Jingle's recommendation, and blazoned it on the rather dingy forefront, of grey brick: “Good house—nice beds.” It is still very much as it was when Dickens conferred immortality upon it; only there are now portraits of him and pictures of Pickwickian characters on the walls of the staircase. Still you may find in the hall the “illustrious larder,” rather like a Chippendale book-case, behind whose glass doors the “noble joints and tarts” are still placed—only I think they have not now the nobility or the aldermanic proportions demanded by an earlier generation—and the cold fowls are indubitably there. The “very grove” of dangling uncooked joints is, if one's memory of such things serves, not as described, in the hall, but depending, as they commonly are made to do in old inns, from hooks in the ceiling of the archway entrance. The custom excites the curiosity of many. To the majority of observers it has seemed to be by way of advertisement of the good cheer within; but the real reason is sufficiently simple: it is to keep the joints fresh and sweet in the current of air generally to be reckoned upon in that situation.

The ball-room, with the “elevated den” for musicians at one end, is a real room, and you wonder exceedingly at the smallness, not only of the den, but of the room itself, where the fine

flower of Dockyard society gathered and fraternised with the even finer flower of that belonging to the Garrison: the two, joining forces, condescending to, or sneering upon, the vulgar herd of tradesmen and their wives.

In this somewhat exiguous apartment Tupman and Jingle danced, and the bellicose Dr. Slammer, of the 97th Regiment, glared; and the society of Chatham and Rochester had, you cannot help thinking, a very close and tightly packed evening.

They take their *Pickwickian* associations very seriously at the "Bull," which, by the way, is an "inn" no longer, but an "hotel." In 1836, the Princess Victoria and her mother, travelling to London, were detained by stress of weather that rendered it dangerous to cross the bridge, and they reluctantly stayed at Rochester the night. Who were low-class *Pickwickians*, that they should stand before such distinction? So the old house for a while took on a new name, and became the "Victoria and Bull," and then, Royal associations gradually waning and literary landmarks growing more popular, the "Bull and Victoria," finally, in these last years, revered again to its simple old name.

That Royal visit is well-nigh forgotten now, and you are no longer invited to look with awe upon the rooms occupied by those august, indubitably flesh-and-blood travellers; but you *are* shown the bedrooms of the entirely fictitious *Pickwickians*.

“So this is where Mr. Pickwick is supposed to have slept?” remarked a visitor, when viewing bedroom No. 17 by favour of a former landlord. That stranger meant no offence, but the landlord was greatly ruffled. “*Supposed* to have slept? He *did* sleep here, sir!”

“O ye verities!” as Carlyle might have exclaimed.



THE “BULL,” ROCHESTER.

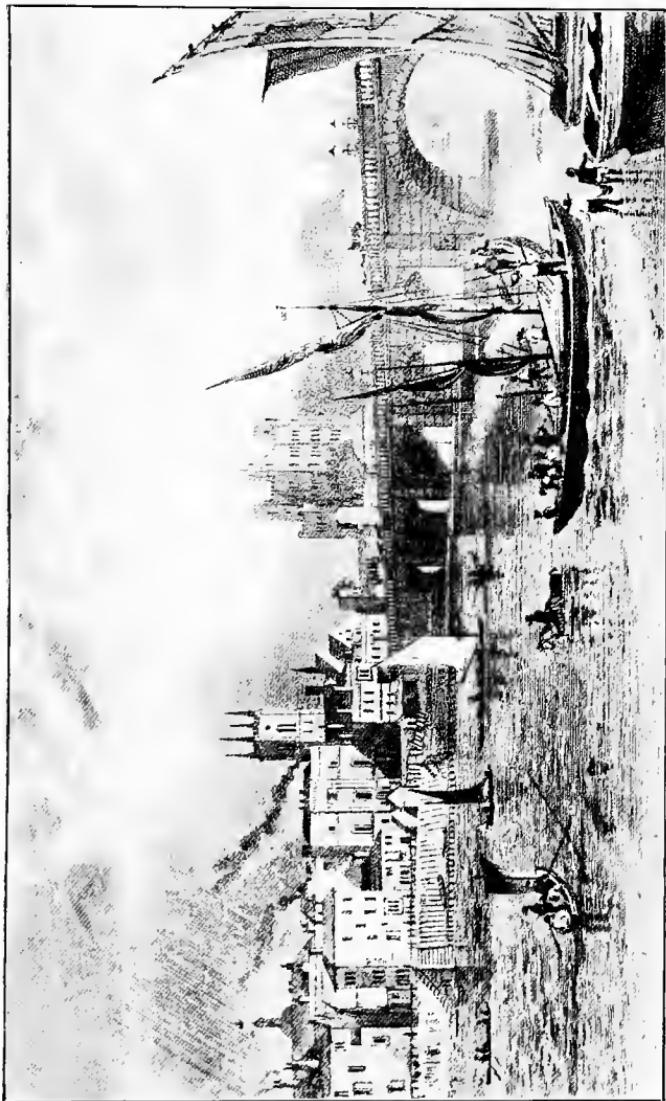
Many Dickens commentators have long cherished what Horace Walpole might have styled a “historic doubt” as to what house was that one in Rochester referred to by Jingle as Wright’s. “Wright’s, next house, dear—very dear—half a crown in the bill if you look at the waiter—charge you more if you dine at a friend’s than they would if you dined in the coffee-

room—rum fellows—very.” But “Wright’s” really was the next “house”—house, that is to say, in the colloquial sense, by which “public-house” is understood, and not by any means next door.

There is every excuse for writers on Dickens-land going wrong here, for the real name of the old house to which Wright came, somewhere about 1820, and on which he imposed his own was the “Crown.”

The old “Crown” fronted on to the High Street, and was one of those old galleried inns already mentioned so plentifully in these pages. It claimed to have been built in 1390, and its yard was not only the spot where, unknown to all save his intimates, Henry the Eighth had his first peep at his intended consort Anne of Cleves, whom that disappointed connoisseur in feminine beauty immediately styled a “Flanders mare”; but was in all probability the original of the inn-yard in *Henry the Fourth*, whence Shakespeare’s flea-bitten carriers with their razes of ginger and other goods for London, sleepless probably on account of those uncovenanted co-partners of their beds, set forth, by starlight, yawning, with much talk of highway dangers. At the “Crown” too, once stayed no less a personage than Queen Elizabeth; while some two centuries later Hogarth and his fellow-roysterers stayed a night in the house, on their “Frolic” down Thames.

When Wright came to the “Crown,” he, like any other monarch newly come to his own, made



ROCHESTER IN PICKWICKIAN DAYS, SHOWING THE OLD BRIDGE AND "WRIGHT'S,"



sweeping alterations. Antiquity, gabled frontages, elaborately carved barge-boards, and all such architectural vanities were nothing to him, nor indeed were they much to any one else in that grossly unappreciative era, and he left that portion of the house to carriers and the like, used all their lives to be leeched by diminutive lepidoptera. Wright did business with customers of more tender hide, who had preferences for more civilised lodgment, and housed the great, the rich, and the luxurious, travelling post to and fro along the Dover Road. For their accommodation he built a remarkably substantial and amazingly ugly structure—a something classical that might, by the look of it, be either town hall, heathen temple, or early dissenting chapel—in the rear, and facing the river. This was the building essentially “Wright’s.” It still stands, and people with sharp eyes, who look very hard in the right place, will yet discover a ghostly “Wright’s” on what Mrs. Gamp would call the “parapidge.”

Such a place would naturally impress a poor strolling actor like Jingle, whose humorous sally, “charge you more if you dine at a friend’s than they would if you dined in the coffee-room,” is a perversion of the well-known charge for “corkage” made by hotel-keepers when a guest brings his own wine.

Wright himself has, of course, long since gone to that place where innkeepers who make extravagant demands upon travellers are held to account.

The course of *Pickwick* now takes us to

“Muggleton,” as to whose identity much uncertainty has long been felt. It is a choice between Maidstone and Town Malling, and as the distances given in the book between Rochester and Dingley Dell and “Muggleton” cannot be made to agree with either Town Malling or Maidstone, it is a poor choice at the best. At the former the



THE “SWAN,” TOWN MALLING : IDENTIFIED WITH THE  
“BLUE LION,” MUGGLETON.

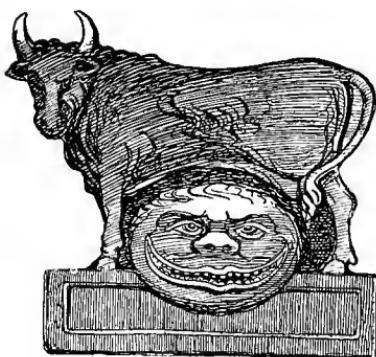
“Swan” is pointed to as the real “Blue Lion,” and at Maidstone the “White Lion.”

Chapter X. takes us back to London, and there brings on to the crowded stage of *Pickwick*, for the first time, Sam Weller, engaged as “Boots” of the “White Hart” in the Borough, in going over the foot-gear of the guests.

This is how Dickens described the yard of the

“White Hart.” It is a little clean-cut cameo of description, vividly portraying the features of those old galleried inns that are now no more: “The yard presented none of that bustle and activity which are the usual characteristics of a large coach inn. Three or four lumbering waggons, each with a pile of goods beneath its ample canopy about the height of the second-floor window of an ordinary house, were stowed away beneath a lofty roof which extended over one end of the yard; and another, which was probably to commence its journey that morning, was drawn out into the open space. A double tier of bedroom galleries with old clumsy balustrades ran round

two sides of the straggling area, and a double row of bells to correspond, sheltered from the weather by a little sloping roof, hung over the door leading to the bar and coffee-room. Two or three gigs or chaise-carts were wheeled up under different little sheds and pent-houses, and the occasional heavy tread of a cart-horse, or rattling of a chain at the further end of the yard, announced to anyone who cared about the matter that the stable lay in that direction. When we add that a few boys in smock-frocks were lying asleep on heavy packages,



SIGN OF THE “BULL AND MOUTH.”

woolpacks, and other articles that were scattered about on heaps of straw, we have described as fully as need be the general appearance of the 'White Hart' inn, High Street, Borough."

This one of the many picturesque old galleried inns of that street was demolished in 1865.

Sam is busily engaged, at moment of his introduction, cleaning eleven pairs of boots belonging to the sleepers in the galleried bedrooms above.

"A loud ringing of one of the bells was followed by the appearance of a smart chambermaid in the upper sleeping gallery, who, after tapping at one of the doors and receiving a request from within, called over the balustrades:

" 'Sam.'

" 'Hallo!'

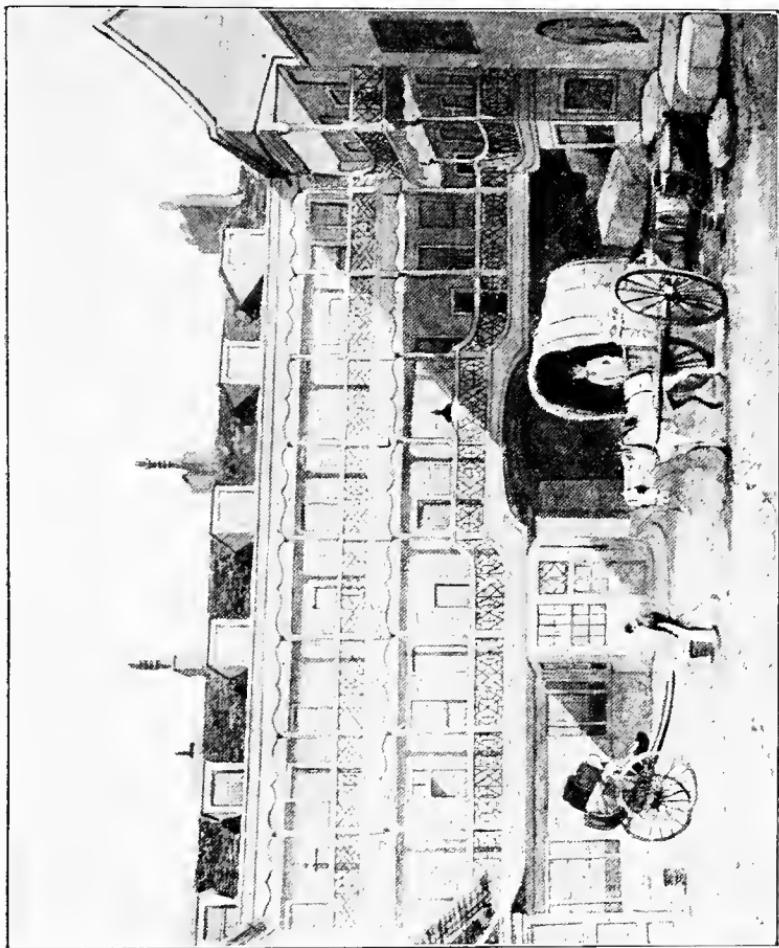
" 'Number Twenty-two wants his boots.'

" 'Ask Number Twenty-two whether he'll have 'em now, or wait till he gets 'em,'" was the reply.

Presently to this waggish person enter Mr. Pickwick, Old Wardle, and Perker, the lawyer. " 'Pretty busy, eh?'" asks the lawyer.

" Oh, werry well, sir; we shan't be bankrupts, and we shan't make our fort'ns. We eats our biled mutton without capers, and don't care about horse-radish wen we can get beef;'" which just about figures the middling and declining fortunes of the old Borough inns at that period.

The "Bull and Mouth" inn, casually mentioned in Chapter X., was the great coaching inn that stood in St. Martin's-le-Grand, on the site of



THE "BELLE SAUVAGE."  
*From a drawing by T. Hosmer Sheldon.*



the Post Office building adjoining the church of St. Botolph. In 1830 it was rebuilt and re-named the "Queen's Hotel," and so remained until 1887. The enormous plaster sign of the "Bull and Mouth," that was placed over the entrance to the stables in the by-street of that name, and kept



THE "LEATHER BOTTLE," COBHAM.

its place there when the stables became a railway goods yard, is now in the Guildhall Museum.

The "Belle Sauvage," on Ludgate Hill, another fine old galleried inn whence the coaches for the eastern counties largely set forth, is the subject of allusion in Chapters X. and XLIII. The house was pulled down many years ago, but the yard, now very commonplace, remains. It was known as "Savage's Inn" so long ago as the

reign of Henry the Sixth, and alternatively as the “Bell in the Hoop.” So early as 1568, when the property was bequeathed to the Cutler’s Company “for ever,” the “Belle Sauvage” myth was current; and thus we see that when Addison, in *The Spectator*, suggested the “beautiful savage” idea, he was but unconsciously reviving an ancient legend or witticism. One other variant, that ingeniously refers the sign of the inn to one Isabella Savage, a former landlady, seems to have created her for the purpose.

The “Marquis o’ Granby” at Dorking, kept by the “widder” who became the second Mrs. Weller, has been identified by some with the late “King’s Head” in that town; while the “Town Arms,” the “Peacock,” and the “White Hart” at “Eatanswill” (*i.e.* Ipswich) have never been clearly traced.

No difficulty of identification surrounds the “Old Leather Bottle” at Cobham, to whose rustic roof the love-lorn Tupman fled to hide his sorrows, in Chapter XI. It is to-day, however, a vastly altered place from the merely “clean and commodious village ale-house” in which Mr. Pickwick found his moping, but still hungry, friend, and its “Dickens Room” is a veritable museum. Additions have been made to the house, and it is now more or less of a rustic hotel, with the sign of the leather bottle swinging in the breeze, and beneath it our Mr. Pickwick himself, in the immortal attitude depicted in the frontispiece to *The Pickwick Papers*, declaiming, with one arm



THE DICKENS ROOM, "LEATHER BOTTLE," COBHAM.



outstretched, the other tucked away under his coat-tails.

The “inn on Marlborough Downs,” referred to in the Bagman’s Story in Chapter XIV., is still the subject of much heated controversy among Dickens commentators. Sandwiched as it is (in the story told by a stranger to the Pickwickians at “Eatanswill”) between Ipswich and Bury St. Edmunds, it appears to be a vague recollection dragged in, neck and crop, by Dickens, of some inn he had casually noticed in 1835, when travelling between London and Bristol. “But,” it has been asked, “*what* inn was he thinking of, if indeed, of any specific inn at all ?”

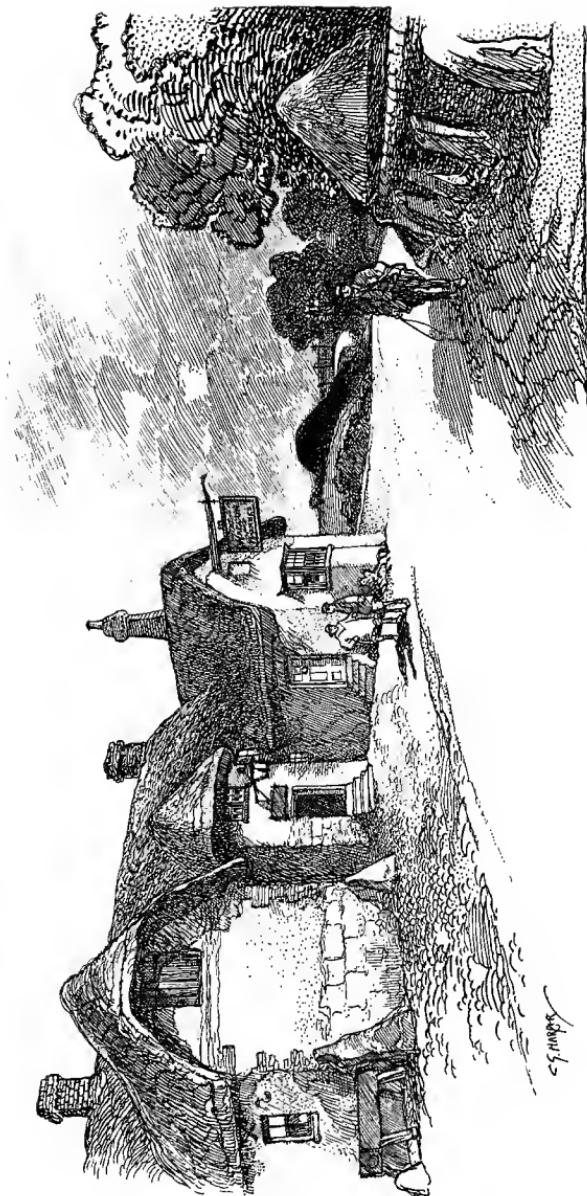
The Bagman with the Lonely Eye, who told the story of Tom Smart and the widow-landlady of this wayside hostelry, spoke of Tom Smart driving his gig “in the direction of Bristol” across the bleak expanse, and of his mare drawing up of her own accord “before a roadside inn on the right-hand side of the way, about half a quarter of a mile from the end of the downs.”

We are met here, at the very outset, by some puzzling discrepancies and by a wide choice, “Marlborough Downs” being a stretch of wild, inhospitable chalk-down country extending the whole of the fourteen miles between Marlborough and Devizes, and being still “Marlborough Downs” at the threshold of Devizes itself. Moreover, the same characteristic features are common to both the routes to Bath and Bristol that branch at Beckhampton and go, left by

way of Devizes, and right through Calne and Chippenham.

The “half a quarter of a mile from the end of the Downs” by the Devizes route brings you, in the direction Tom Smart (of the firm of Bilson and Slum) was going, to a point a half, or three quarters, of a mile from Devizes town, where, neither on the right hand nor the left, was there ever an inn. The same distance from the end of this weird district on the Calne and Chippenham route conducts to the “Black Horse” inn at Cherhill, full in view of the great white horse cut on the hillside in 1780, and standing, correctly enough, on the right-hand side of the way. Could this inn possibly have been the house referred to by Dickens? I have never seen it suggested.

Indeed, earnest people who would dearly, once for all, wish to settle this knotty point, are like to be embarrassed by the numerous inns, not one of them greatly resembling the house described by Dickens, that have claims to be considered the original, and stand, *all* of them, upon the proper side of the road. Some commentators press the claim of the “Marquis of Ailesbury’s Arms” at Manton, or Clatford, a mile out of Marlborough, and local opinion at the time of *The Pickwick Papers* being written identified the house with the lonely inn of Shepherd’s Shore, midway between Beckhampton and Devizes, in the very midst of the wild downs—the downs of Marlborough—that are there at their wildest and loneliest. Whatever the correctness or otherwise of what should be



THE "WAGGON AND HORSES," BECKHAMPTON.



an expert view, certainly the inn of Shepherd's Shore is a thing of the past, as in the story, where it is described as having been pulled down. There were, indeed, at different periods two inns so called, and now both are gone. "Old Shepherd's Shore" stood, as also did the new, beside the Wansdyke, but at a considerable distance in a north-westerly direction, on the *old* road to Devizes, now a mere track. Of "New Shepherd's



"SHEPHERD'S SHORE."

Shore" only a fragment remains, and although that fragment is inhabited, it is not any longer an inn.

The scene is entirely in accord with the description of the Downs in the Bagman's Story (only the spot is in the *midst* of the wilderness, and not near the end of it), and he who even nowadays travels the still lonesome way will heartily echo the statement that there are many

pleasanter places. The old coachmen, who had exceptional opportunities of observation, used to declare that the way between Beckhampton and Shepherd's Shore was the coldest spot on all the road between London and Bath.

The eerie nature of the spot is emphasised by the circumstance of the remaining portion of the house standing beside that mysterious pre-historic earthwork, the great ditch and embankment of the Wansdyke, that goes marching grimly across the stark hillsides. The Wansdyke has always impressed the beholder, and accordingly we find it marked on old maps as "Deuill's Ditch."

The name of "Shepherd's Shore" has been, and still is, a sore puzzle to all who have cause to write of it. Often written "Shord," and pronounced by the country folk "Shard," just as old seventeenth-century Aubrey prints it, antiquaries believe the name to derive from "shard," a fragment: here specifically a break in the Wansdyke, made in order to let the road (or the sheep-track) through; "shard" itself being the Middle-English version of the Anglo-Saxon "sceard," a division, a boundary, or a breach.

The name may, however, as I conceive it, be equally well a corrupt version of "Shepherd's Shaw." "Shaw" = the old Anglo-Saxon for a coppice, a clump of trees, or a bush. We see, even to-day (as of course merely a coincidence) a clump of trees on the mystic tumulus beside the remains of the house: trees noticeable enough on these otherwise naked downs, now, as from

time immemorial, a grazing-ground for sheep. In this view Shepherd's Shore would be equivalent to "Shepherd's Shaw," and that to "Shepherd's Wood," or "Shepherd's Bush." A shepherd's bush was commonly a thorn-tree on a sheep-down, used as a shelter, or as a post of observation, by shepherds watching their flocks. Such bushes, by constant use, assumed distinctive and unmistakable forms,<sup>1</sup> and in old times were familiarly known by that name.

But, to resume matters more purely Dickensian: it is the "Waggon and Horses" inn at Beckhampton that most nearly realises the description of the house in *The Pickwick Papers*, although even here you most emphatically go up into the house (as the illustration shows) instead of taking "a couple of steep steps leading down." It is "on the right-hand side of the way," and being at a kind of little cultivated oasis at the hamlet of Beckhampton, where the roads fork on the alternative routes to Bath and Bristol, it may be considered as "about half a quarter of a mile" from the recommencement (not the end) of the Downs.

The "Waggon and Horses" is just the house a needy bagman such as Tom Smart would have selected. It was in coaching days a homely yet

<sup>1</sup> Cf. a lengthy description of the origin of the place-name "Shepherd's Bush" in the West of London: *The Oxford, Gloucester, and Milford Haven Road*, vol. i. pp. 55-57. Also compare the still-existent "shepherd's-bush" thorn-trees on West Winch Common, Norfolk.

comfortable inn, that received those travellers who did not relish either the state or the expense of the great “Beckhampton Inn” opposite, where post-horses were kept, and where the very *élite* of the roads resorted.

“The humble shall be exalted and the proud shall be cast down,” and it so happened that when the Great Western Railway was opened to Bath and Bristol on June 30th, 1841, the great inn fell upon ruination, while its humbler neighbour has survived—and does very well, thank you. It should be added that in the view presented here you are looking eastward, back in the direction of Marlborough. The great dark hill beside the road in the middle distance is the vast pre-historic tumulus, the largest known in Europe, famous as Silbury Hill.

The great house that was once “Beckhampton Inn” is now, and long has been, Mr. Samuel Darling’s training-stables for racehorses. There is probably no better-kept lawn in England than that triangular plot of grass in front of the house, where—as you see in the picture—the roads fork.

The “Angel” at Bury St. Edmunds, the scene of many stirring incidents in Chapters XV. and XVI., is an enormous house of very severe and unornamental architecture, that looks as though it were an exercise in rectangles and a Puritan protest in white Suffolk, dough-like brick, against the mediaeval pomps and vanities of the beautiful carved stone Abbey Gatehouse, upon which it looks, gauntly, across the great open, plain-like,

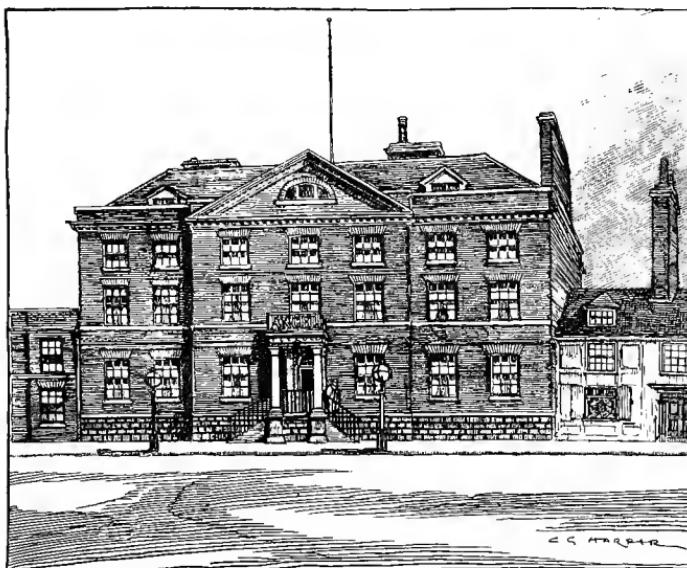


"BECKHAMTON INN."



empty thoroughfare of Angel Hill. This, the chief coaching- and posting-house of Bury, was built in 1779 upon the site of a fifteenth-century “Angel,” and the present structure still stands upon groined crypts and cellars.

None may be so bold as to name for certain that tavern off Cheapside in Chapter XX., to



THE “ANGEL,” BURY ST. EDMUNDS.

which the worried Mr. Pickwick “bent his steps” after the interview with Dodson and Fogg, in Freeman’s Court, Cornhill. We know it was in some court on the right-hand, or north, side of Cheapside; but, on the other hand, we do not know how far Mr. Pickwick had proceeded along that thoroughfare when Sam recommended, as a

suitable place for “a glass of brandy and water warm,” the “last house but vun on the same side the vay—take the box as stands in the first fireplace, ‘cos there an’t no leg in the middle o’ the table, wich all the others has, and it’s very inconvenient.” Probably Grocers’ Hall Court is meant. It has still its coffee- and chop-houses.

There it is that Tony Weller is introduced, and suggests that, as he is “working down” the coach to Ipswich in a couple of days’ time, from the “Bull” inn Whitechapel, Mr. Pickwick had better go with him. An incidental allusion is made in the same place to the “Black Boy” at Chelmsford, a fine old coaching inn, destroyed in 1857.

Mr. Pickwick was a good—nay, a phenomenal—pedestrian for so stout a man. From Cheapside—fortified possibly by the brandy and water—he walked to Gray’s Inn, there ascending two pairs of steep (and dirty) stairs, and thence to Clare Market, and the “Magpie and Stump,” described as “situated in a court, happy in the double advantage of being in the vicinity of Clare Market and closely approximating to the back of ‘New Inn.’”

It was “what ordinary people would designate a public-house,” and has been identified by most with the “Old Black Jack” in Portsmouth Street, or its next-door neighbour, the “George the Fourth Tavern,” both demolished in 1896. The last-named house was remarkable for entirely overhanging the pavement, the very tall building being supported on wooden posts springing from

the kerb. In the words of Dickens: "In the lower windows, which were decorated with curtains of a saffron hue, dangled two or three printed cards, bearing reference to Devonshire cyder and



THE "GEORGE THE FOURTH TAVERN," CLARE MARKET.

Dantzic spruce, while a large black board, announcing in white letters to an enlightened public that there were 500,000 barrels of double stout in the cellars of the establishment, left the mind in a state of not unpleasing doubt and uncertainty as

to the precise direction in the bowels of the earth in which this mighty cavern might be supposed to extend. When we add that the weather-beaten sign-board bore the half-obliterated semblance of a magpie intently eyeing a crooked streak of brown paint, which the neighbours had been taught from infancy to consider as the ‘stump,’ we have said all that need be said of the exterior of the edifice.”

The “Black Jack,” next door, was in the eighteenth century the scene of one of the famous Jack Sheppard’s exploits. The Bow Street runners entered the house after him, and, as they went in at the door, he jumped out of a first-floor window. In thieving circles the house was afterwards known as “The Jump.” The “Black Jack,” however, romantic though the title sounds, did not owe its name to Sheppard, but to that old style of vessel, the leather jacks or jugs of the Middle Ages. For their better preservation, the old leather jacks were often treated with a coating of pitch: hence the name of “pitcher,” at a very early period enlarged to denote jugs in general, whether of leather or of earthenware.

The proverbial pitcher that goes often to the well and is broken at last could not possibly be a leather one, for the greatest virtue of the leather vessel was its indestructible nature, well set forth in the old song of “The Leather Bottel”:

And when the bottle at last grows old,  
And will good liquor no longer hold,  
Out of its sides you may make a clout  
To mend your shoes when they’re worn out;

Or take and hang it upon a pin—  
'Twill serve to put hinges and odd things in.  
So I hope his soul in Heaven may dwell  
Who first found out the Leather Bottel.

Such leather bottles, some of them very ancient, are often to be found, even at this day, in the barns and outhouses of remote hamlets, with a side cut away to receive those “hinges and odd things” of the verse. They are also often used to hold cart-grease.

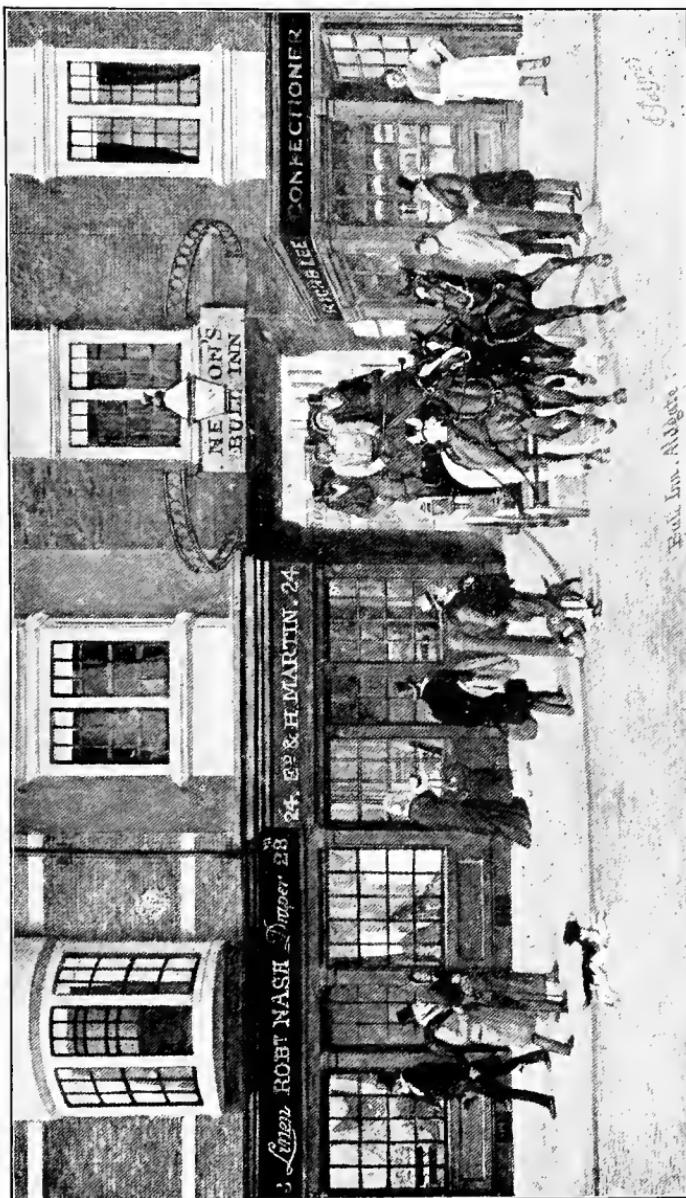
The “Bull,” Whitechapel, whence Mr. Tony Weller “worked down” to Ipswich, was numbered No. 25, Aldgate High Street. It stood in the rear of the narrow entry shown in the accompanying illustration. Rightly, it will be seen, did Mr. Tony Weller advise the “outsides” on his coach to “take care o’ the archvay, gen’lm’n.” The “Bull” was long occupied by the widowed Mrs. Ann Nelson—one of those stern, dignified, magisterial women of business who were a quite remarkable feature of the coaching age, who saw their husbands off to an early grave, and alone carried on the peculiarly exacting double business of innkeeping and coach-proprietorship, and did so with success. Mrs. Ann Nelson—no one ever dared so greatly as to spell her name “Anne”—was the Napoleon and Cæsar combined of the coaching business on the East Anglian roads, and accomplished the remarkable feat—remarkable for an innkeeper in the East End of London—of also owning that crack mail-coach of the West of England Road, the Devonport “Quicksilver.” As

Mrs. Nelson would permit no “e” to her Christian name, so also she would never hear of her house being called “hotel.” It was, to the last, the “Bull Inn”; as you see in the illustration, with Martin’s woollen-drapery shop, formerly that of James Johnson, whip-maker, on the one side and that of Lee, the confectioner, on the other. Richard Lee himself you perceive standing on the pavement, taking a very keen interest in the coach emerging from the yard, as he had every reason to do; for he, like William Lee, his father before him, was a partner, though not a publicly acknowledged one, with Mrs. Nelson, and the money he made out of his jam tarts he invested, with much profit to himself, in that autocratic lady’s coaching speculations.

From the date of the opening of the Eastern Counties Railway, in 1839, the business of the “Bull” began to decline, and the house was at length sold and demolished in 1868.<sup>1</sup>

The journey from the “Bull” ended at the “Great White Horse” at Ipswich, a house that still survives and flourishes on the notice (including even the abuse) that Dickens gave it. The “Great White Horse” is neither ancient nor beautiful; but it *is* great and it *is* white, for it is built of a pallid kind of brick strongly suggesting under-done pastry, and it is in these days the object to which most visitors to Ipswich first turn

<sup>1</sup> For further particulars respecting the “Bull,” see *The Norwich Road*, pp. 19-28, and *Stage-coach and Mail in Days of Yore*, vol. i., p. 324; vol. ii., pp. 227, 232-5, 343.



THE "BULL INN," WHITTECHAPEL

From the water-colour drawing by P. Polley.



their attention, whether they are to stay in the house or not.

In the merry days of the road, when this huge caravanserai was built, it was justly thought



DOORWAY OF THE "GREAT WHITE HORSE," IPSWICH.

enormous ; but it has been left to the present age to build many hotels in town and country capable of containing half-a-dozen or more hostelries the size of the "Great White Horse," which by comparison with them is as a Shetland pony is to the great hairy-legged creatures that still, even in

these “horseless” times, haul waggons and brewers’ drays.

Especially did the bulk of this house strike the imagination of that young reporter of the London *Morning Chronicle* who in 1830 was despatched to Ipswich for the purpose of reporting a Parliamentary election. That reporter was, of course, Dickens. The inn made so great an impression upon him that, when he wrote about it in the pages of *Pickwick*, a few years later, his description was as exact as though it had been penned on the spot.

It was not a flattering description. Few more severe things have ever been said of an inn than those Dickens said of the “Great White Horse.” Yet, such is the irony of time and circumstance, the house Dickens so roundly attacked is now eager, in all its advertisements, to quote the Dickensian association; and the adventures of Mr. Pickwick in the double-bedded room (now identified with No. 36) of the elderly lady in yellow curl-papers have attracted more visitors than the unfavourable notice has turned away.

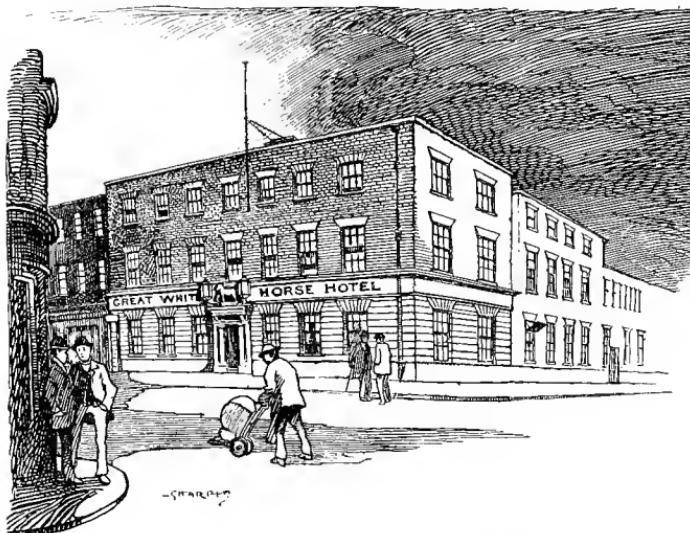
“The ‘Great White Horse,’ ” said Dickens, “is famous in the neighbourhood in the same degree as a prize ox, or county-paper-chronicled turnip, or unwieldy pig—for its enormous size. Never were there such labyrinths of uncarpeted passages, such clusters of mouldy, ill-lighted rooms, such huge numbers of small dens for eating or sleeping in, beneath any one roof, as are collected together

between the four walls of the ‘Great White Horse’ at Ipswich.”

The house was evidently then an exception to the rule of the “good old days,” of comfort and good cheer and plenty of it; for, passing the corpulent and insolent waiter, “with a fortnight’s napkin under his arm and coeval stockings on his legs,” Mr. Pickwick entered only to find the dining-room “a large, badly furnished apartment, with a dirty grate, in which a small fire was making a wretched attempt to be cheerful, but was fast sinking beneath the dispiriting influence of the place. After the lapse of an hour, a bit of fish and a steak were served up to the travellers,” who then, ordering “a bottle of the worst possible port wine, at the highest possible price, for the good of the house, drank brandy and water for their own.”

I may here mention the singular parallel in Besant and Rice’s novel, *The Seamy Side*, where, in Chapter XXVIII., you will find Gilbert Yorke going to the hotel at Lulworth, in Dorset, and there ordering, like another Will Waterproof, “for the good of the house,” “a pint of port” after dinner. He, we are told, could not drink “the ardent port of country inns,” and therefore “he poured the contents of the bottle into a pot of mignonette in the window. . . . The flowers waggled their heads sadly and then drooped and died,” as of course, being notoriously total abstainers, they could not choose but do. But it was unfair, alike to the port and the plants.

How changed the times since those when Mr. Pickwick stayed at the "Great White Horse!" We read how, after his unpleasant adventure with the lady in the yellow curl-papers, he "stood alone, in an open passage, in the middle of the night, half dressed," and in perfect darkness, with the uncomfortable knowledge that, if he tried to



THE "GREAT WHITE HORSE," IPSWICH.

find his own bedroom by turning the handles of each one in succession "he stood every chance of being shot at, and perhaps killed, by some wakeful traveller." No one in a similar position would have that fear now: and even American guests, commonly supposed to "go heeled," *i.e.* to carry an armoury of six-shooters about them,

do not invariably sleep with their shooting-irons under their pillows.

The exterior of the “Great White Horse” is much the same as when Dickens saw it, “in the main street of Ipswich, on the left-hand side of the way.” Still over the pillared portico trots the effigy of the Great White Horse himself, “a stone statue of some rampacious animal, with flowing mane and tail, distantly resembling an insane cart-horse”; but the old courtyard has in modern times been roofed in with glass, and is now a something partaking in equal parts of winter-garden, smoking-lounge, and bar.

Returning again to London from Ipswich, Mr. Pickwick, giving up his lodgings in Goswell Road with the treacherous Mrs. Bardell, took up his abode in “very good old-fashioned and comfortable quarters, to wit, the ‘George and Vulture’ Tavern and Hotel, George Yard, Lombard Street.”

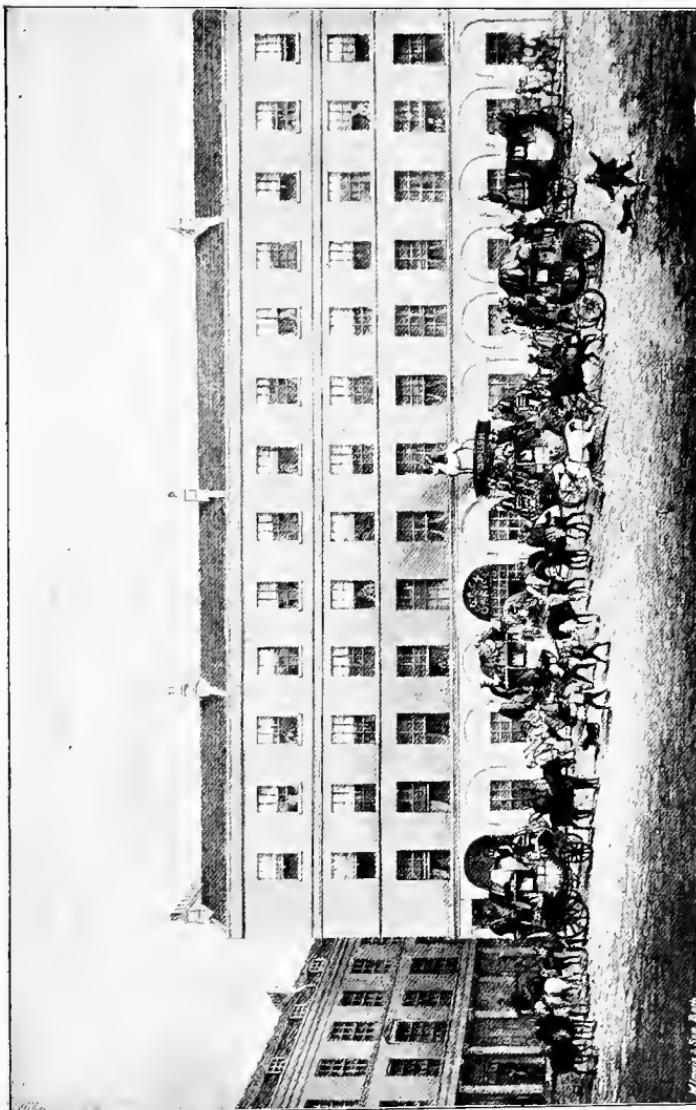
One may no longer stay at the “George and Vulture,” and indeed, if one might, I do not know that any one would choose, for after business hours, and on Sundays and holidays, the modern George Yard, now entirely hemmed in with the enormous buildings of banks and insurance-companies, is a dismally deserted and forbidding place. The sunlight only by dint of great endeavour comes at a particular hour slanting down to one side of the stony courtyard, and the air is close and stale. But on days of business, and in the hours of business, in the continual stream of passers-by, you do not notice these things.

Many of those whom you see in George Yard disappear, a little mysteriously it seems, in an obscure doorway, tucked away in an angle. It might, in most likelihood, be a bank to which they enter; but, as a sheer matter of fact, it is the “George and Vulture”: in these days one of the most famous of City chop-houses.

I have plumbed the depths of depravity in chops, and have found them often naturally hard, tasteless, and greasily fat; or if not naturally depraved, the wicked incapacity of those who cook them has in some magic way exorcised their every virtue. It matters little to you whether your chop be innately uneatable, or whether it has acquired that defect in the cooking: the net result is that you go hungry.

At the “George and Vulture,” as before noted, you may not stay—or “hang out,” as it was suggested by Bob Sawyer that Mr. Pickwick did—but there you do nowadays find chops of the best, cooked to perfection on the grill, and may eat off old-world pewter plates and, to complete the ideality of the performance, drink ale out of pewter tankards; all in the company of a crowded roomful of hungry City men, and in a very Babel of talk. And, ah me! where does the proprietor get that perfect port?

Between Chapters XXVI. and XXXIV. we have a perfect constellation—or rather, a species of cloudy Milky Way—of inns, nebulous, undefined; but in Chapter XXXV. we find Mr. Pickwick, on his way to Bath, waiting for the



THE "WHITE HART," BATH.



coach in the travellers'-room of the "White Horse Cellar," Piccadilly, a very brilliant star of an inn, indeed, in its day; but rather a migratory one, for in the coaching age it was removed from its original site at the corner of Arlington Street, where the Ritz Hotel stands now, to the opposite side of the road, at the corner of Albemarle Street. There it remained until 1884, when the old house was pulled down and the present "Albemarle" built in its stead.

Mr. Pickwick was "twenty minutes too early" for the half-past seven o'clock in the morning coach, and so, leaving Sam Weller single-handedly to contend with the seven or eight porters who had flung themselves upon the luggage, he and his friends went for shelter to "the travellers'-room—the last resource of human dejection"—railways in general and the waiting-rooms of Clapham Junction in especial not having at that time come into existence, to plunge mankind into deeper abysses of melancholia.

"The travellers'-room at the 'White Horse Cellar' is, of course, uncomfortable; it would be no travellers'-room if it were not. It is the right-hand parlour, into which an aspiring kitchen fireplace appears to have walked, accompanied by a rebellious poker, tongs, and shovel. It is divided into boxes, for the solitary confinement of travellers, and is furnished with a clock, a looking-glass, and a live waiter: which latter article is kept in a small kennel for washing glasses, in a corner of the apartment."

So now we know what the primeval ancestor of the Railway Waiting-room, with its advertisements of cheap excursions to places to which you do not want to go, and its battered Bible on the table was like, and it seems pretty clear that, whatever the travellers'-room of a coaching inn might have been, its present representative is a degenerate.

Chapter XXXV. sees Mr. Pickwick and his friends arrived at Bath and duly installed in “their private sitting-rooms at the ‘White Hart’ Hotel, opposite the great Pump-room, where the waiters, from their costume, might be mistaken for Westminster boys, only they destroy the illusion by behaving themselves much better.”

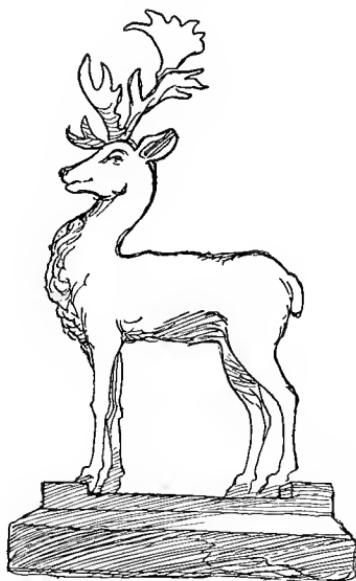
Until its last day, which came in 1864, the great “White Hart,” owned by the Moses Pickwick from whose name Dickens probably derived that of the immortal Samuel, maintained the ceremonial manners of an earlier age, and habited its waiters in knee-breeches and silk stockings, while the chambermaids wore muslin caps. The Grand Pump-room Hotel now stands on the site of the “White Hart,” and the well-modelled effigy of the White Hart himself, seen in the illustration of the old coaching inn, has been transferred to a mere public-house of the same name in the slummy suburb of Widcombe.

Round the corner from Queen Square, Bath, is the mean street where Dickens pilgrims may gaze upon the “Beaufort Arms,” the mean little public-house identified, on a very slender thread,

with the “greengrocer’s shop” to which Sam Weller was invited to the footmen’s “swarry.” The identification hangs chiefly by the circumstance that it is known to have been the particular meeting-place of the Bath footmen, just as the “Running Footman” in Hay Hill, London, is even at this day the chosen house of call for the men-servants around Berkeley Square.

The “Royal Hotel,” whence Mr. Winkle fled by branch coach to Bristol, is not to be found, and the “Bush” at Bristol itself is a thing of the past. It stood in Corn Street, and was swept out of existence in 1864, the Wiltshire Bank now standing on the site of it; but how busy a place it was in Pickwickian days let the old picture of coaches arriving and departing eloquently tell.

The inns of the succeeding chapters—the tavern (unnamed) at Clifton, the “Farringdon Hotel,” the “Fox-under-the-Hill,” overlooking the river from Ivy Bridge Lane in the Strand, the “New Hotel,” Serjeant’s Inn Coffee House, and Horn’s Coffee House—are merely given passing



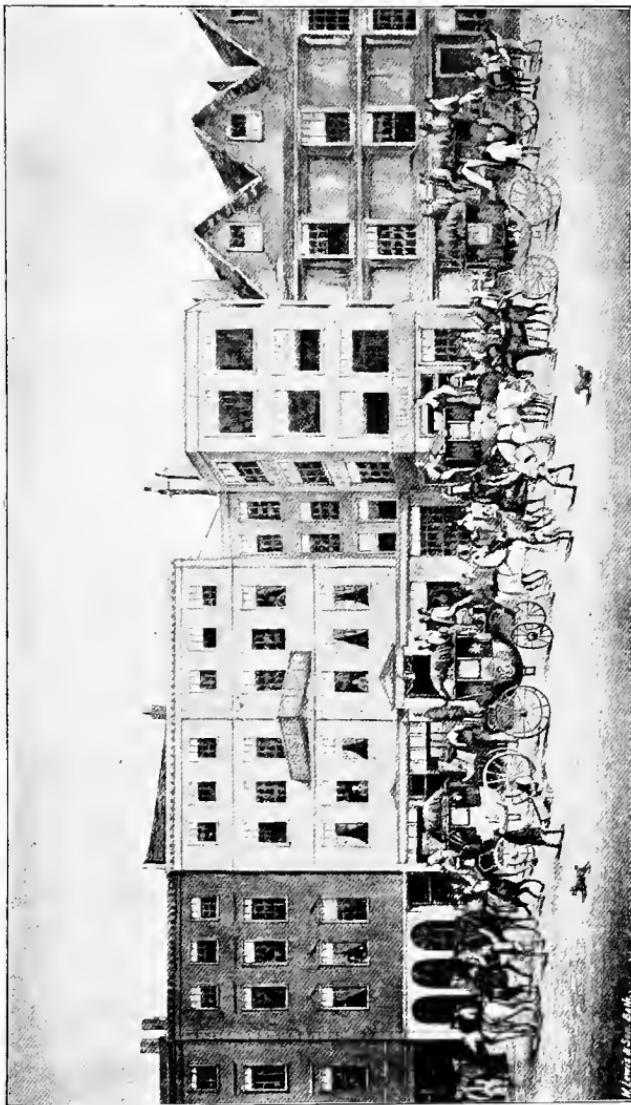
SIGN OF THE “WHITE HART,” BATH.

mention, and it is only in Chapter XLVI. that we come to closer touch with actualities, in the arrest of Mrs. Bardell in the tea-gardens of the “Spaniards” inn, Hampstead Heath. The ear-wiggy arbours of that Cockney resort are still greatly frequented on Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays.

A very modest and comparatively little-known Pickwickian house is the “Bell,” Berkeley Heath, on the dull, flat high-road between Bristol and Gloucester, unaltered since the day when Mr. Pickwick set forth by post-chaise with Mr. Bob Sawyer and his fellow-roysterer, Ben Allen, from the “Bush” at Bristol for Birmingham. Here they had lunch, as the present sign-board of the inn, gravely and with a quaint inaccuracy, informs us: insisting that it was “Charles Dickens and party” who so honoured the “Bell.” They had come only nineteen miles, and without any exertion on their own part, yet when they changed horses here, at half-past eleven a.m., Bob Sawyer found it necessary to dine, to enable them “to bear up against the fatigue.”

“‘Quite impossible!’ said Mr. Pickwick, himself no mean trencherman.

“‘So it is,’ rejoined Bob; ‘lunch is the very thing. Hallo, you sir! Lunch for three, directly, and keep the horses back for a quarter of an hour. Tell them to put everything they have cold on the table, and some bottled ale, and let us taste your very best Madeira.’”



THE "BUSH," BRISTOL.



Those were truly marvellous times. All the way from Bristol those three had been drinking milk-punch, and had emptied a case-bottle of it, and we may be quite sure (although it is not stated) that they made havoc of a prodigious breakfast before they started; yet they did "very great



justice" to that lunch, and when they set off again the case-bottle was filled with "the best substitute for milk-punch that could be procured on so short a notice."

"At the 'Hop-Pole' at Tewkesbury they stopped to dine; upon which occasion there was more bottled ale, with some more Madeira, and some port besides; and here the case-bottle was

replenished for the fourth time.” Therefore, it is evident that, twice on the twenty-four miles between Berkeley Heath and Tewkesbury, they had a re-fill.

We do not find Gloucester mentioned, although it must have been passed on the way; but, under those circumstances, we are by no means surprised.

The “*Hop Pole*” at Tewkesbury is still a “going concern,” and, with the adjoining gabled and timbered houses, is a notable landmark in the High Street. Nowadays it proudly displays a tablet recording its *Pickwickian* associations.

A drunken sleep (for it could have been nothing else) composed those two “*insides*,” Mr. Pickwick and Ben Allen, on the way to Birmingham, while, thanks in part to the fresh air, Sam Weller and Bob Sawyer “sang duets in the dickey.” By the time they were nearing Birmingham it was quite dark. The postboy drove them to the “*Old Royal Hotel*,” where an order for that surely very necessary thing, soda-water, having been given, the waiter “imperceptibly melted away”: a proceeding that, paradoxically enough, seems to have been initiated by the house itself, years before; for it was about 1825, two years before the *Pickwickians* are represented as starting on their travels, that the “*Old Royal*” was transferred from Temple Row to New Street, and there became the “*New Royal*.”

The inn at Coventry, at which the post-horses were changed on the journey from Birmingham, is unnamed, unhonoured, and unsung; but very

famous, in the Pickwickian way, is the "Saracen's Head" at Towcester, or "Toaster," as the towns-folk call it, even though its identity is a little obscured by the sign having been exchanged for that of the "Pomfret Arms." The change, which was actually made in April, 1831, was a complimentary allusion to the Earls of Pomfret, who

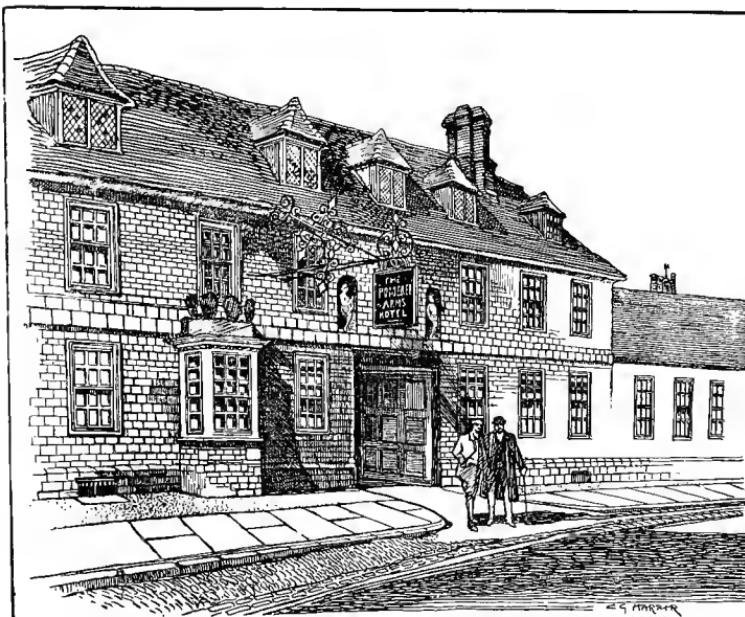


THE "HOP-POLE," TEWKESBURY.

before the title became extinct, in 1867, resided at the neighbouring park of Easton Neston.

In all essentials the inn remains the same as the old coaching hostelry to which Mr. Pickwick and his friends drove up in their post-chaise, after the long wet journey from Coventry. As "at the end of each stage it rained harder than it had done at the beginning," Mr. Pickwick wisely decided to halt here.

"There's beds here," reported Sam; "everything's clean and comfortable. Very good little dinner, sir, they can get ready in half an hour—pair of fowls, sir, and a weal cutlet; French beans, 'tatars, tarts, and tidiness. You'd better stop vere you are, sir, if I might recommend."



THE "POMFRET ARMS," TOWCESTER: FORMERLY THE  
"SARACEN'S HEAD."

At the moment of this earnest colloquy in the rain the landlord of the "Saracen's Head" appeared, "to confirm Mr. Weller's statement relative to the accommodations of the establishment, and to back his entreaties with a variety of dismal conjectures regarding the state of the roads, the doubt of fresh horses being to be had at the next

stage, the dead certainty of its raining all night, the equally mortal certainty of its clearing up in the morning, and other topics of inducement familiar to innkeepers."

When Mr. Pickwick decided to stay, "the landlord smiled his delight" and issued orders to



THE YARD OF THE "POMFRET ARMS."

the waiter. "Lights in the Sun, John; make up the fire; the gentlemen are wet!" he cried anxiously, although, doubtless, if the gentlemen had gone forward they might have been drowned, for all he cared.

And so the scene changed from the rain-washed road to a cosy room, with a waiter laying the cloth for dinner, a cheerful fire burning, and the

tables lit with wax candles. “Everything looked (as everything always does in all decent English inns) as if the travellers had been expected, and their comforts prepared for days beforehand.”

Upon this charming picture of ease at one’s inn descended the atrabilious rival editors of *The Eatanswill Gazette* and *The Eatanswill Independent*, the organs respectively of “blue” and “buff” shades of political opinion. Pott of the *Gazette*, and Slurk of the *Independent* each found his rival sheet lying on the tables of the inn ; but what either of those editors or those newspapers were doing here in Northamptonshire (Eatanswill being a far-distant East Anglian town, by general consensus of opinion identified with Ipswich) is one of those occasional lapses from consistency that in *Pickwick* give the modern commentator and annotator food for speculation.

When the inn was closed for the night Slurk retired to the kitchen to drink his rum and water by the fire, and to enjoy the bitter-sweet luxury of sneering at the rival print ; but, as it happened, Mr. Pickwick’s party, accompanied by Pott, also adjourned to the kitchen to smoke a cigar or so before bed. How ancient, by the way, seems that custom ! Does any guest, anywhere, in these times of smoking-rooms, withdraw to the kitchen to smoke his cigar, pipe, or cigarette ?

How the rival editors—the “unmitigated viper” and the “ungrammatical twaddler”—met and presently came from oblique taunts to direct abuse of one another, and thence to a fight, let the

pages of *The Pickwick Papers* tell. For my part, I refuse to believe that there were ever such journalists.

What was once the kitchen of the "Saracen's Head" is now the bar-parlour of the "Pomfret Arms"; but otherwise the house is the same as



"OSBORNE'S HOTEL, ADELPHI."

when Dickens knew it. The somewhat severe frontage loses in a black-and-white drawing its principal charm, for it is built of the golden-brown local ferruginous sandstone of the district.

The journey to London is carried abruptly from Towcester to its ending at the "George and

Vulture"; and with "Osborne's Hotel in the Adelphi" the last inn to be identified in the closing scenes of *Pickwick* is reached. That staid family hotel, still existing in John Street, and now known as the "Adelphi," is associated with the flight of Emily Wardle and Snodgrass. The sign of the last public-house in the story, "an excellent house near Shooter's Hill," to which Mr. Tony Weller, no longer "of the Bell Savage," retired, is not disclosed.

## CHAPTER XI

### DICKENSIAN INNS

THE knowledge Dickens possessed of inns, old and new, was, as already said, remarkable. His education in this sort began early. From his early years in London, at the blacking factory, when he sampled the "genuine stunning" at the "Red Lion," Parliament Street, through his experiences as a reporter of election speeches in the provinces, when long coach journeys presented a constant succession of inns and posting-houses, circumstances made him familiar with every variety of house of public entertainment; and afterwards, as novelist, he enlarged upon inns from choice, realising as he did that in those days romance had its chief home at them.

Dickensian inns, as treated of in this chapter, are those houses, other than the inns of *Pickwick*, associated with Dickens personally, or through his novels. It is hardly necessary to add at this day, that either association is assiduously cultivated, and that we have almost come to that dizzy edge of things where, in addition to the inns Dickens is certainly known to have mentioned or visited, those he would have treated of or stayed at, had he known better, will come

under review, together with a further paper on the inns he did not immortalise, and why not.

When Dickens first visited Bath, in May, 1835, as a reporter, he stayed, according to tradition, at the humble "Saracen's Head," in Broad Street, and there also, according to tradition, he was assigned a humble room in an outhouse down the yard. A dozen times, if we may believe a former landlady's story, he went with lighted candle across the windy yard to his bedroom; a dozen times, the wind puffed it out, and he never uttered a mild d—! It is a remarkable instance of restraint, likely to remain in the recollection of any landlady.

The "Saracen's Head" cherishes these more or less authentic recollections, and you are shown, not only the room, but the "very bedstead"—a hoary four-poster—upon which Dickens slept; and if you are very good and reverent, and sufficiently abase yourself before the spirit of the place, you will be allowed to drink out of the very mug he is said to have drunk from and sit in the identical chair he is supposed to have sat in; and accordingly, when Dickensians visit Bath they sit in the chair and drink from the mug to the immortal memory, and do not commonly stop to consider this marvellous thing: that the humble, unknown reporter of 1835 should be identified by the innkeeper of that era with the novelist who only became famous two years later.

Going by the Glasgow Mail to Yorkshire in

January, 1838, in company with "Phiz," Dickens acquired the local colour for *Nicholas Nickleby*. We hear, in that story, how the coach carrying Nicholas, Squeers, and the schoolboys down to Dotheboys Hall, dined at "Eaton Slocomb," by which Eaton Socon, fifty-five miles from London, on the Great North Road, is indicated. There, in that picturesque village among the flats of



THE "WHITE HORSE," EATON SOCON.

Huntingdonshire, still stands the charming little "White Horse" inn, which in those days, with the long-vanished "Cock," divided the coaching business on that stage.

Grantham does not figure largely in the story, in whose pages the actual coach journey is lightly dismissed. There we find merely a mention of the "George" as "one of the best inns in England"; but in his private correspondence he refers to that house, enthusiastically, as "the very best

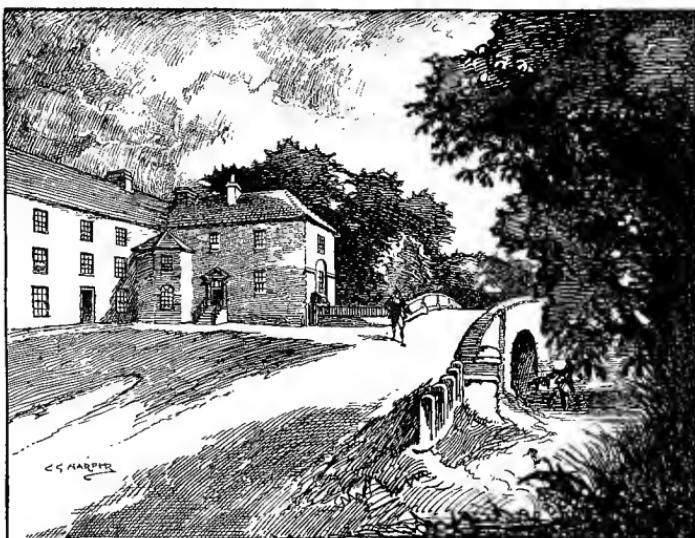
inn I have ever put up at" : and Dickens, as we well know, was a finished connoisseur of inns.

The "George" at Grantham is typically Georgian: four-square, red-bricked and prim. It replaced a fine mediæval building, burnt down in 1780; but what it lacks in beauty it does, according to the testimony of innumerable travellers, make up for in comfort. At the sign of the "George," says one, "you had a cleaner cloth, brighter plate, higher-polished glass, and a brisker fire, with more prompt attention and civility, than at most other places."

From Grantham to Greta Bridge was, in coaching days, one day's journey. There the traveller of to-day finds a quiet hamlet on the banks of the romantic Greta, but in that era it was a busy spot on the main coaching route, with two large and prosperous inns: the "George" and the "New Inn." The "New Inn," where Dickens stayed, is now a farmhouse, "Thorpe Grange" by name; while the "George," standing by the bold and picturesque bridge, has itself retired from public life, and is now known as "the Square." Under that name the great, unlovely building is divided up into tenements for three or four different families.

From Greta Bridge Dickens proceeded to Barnard Castle, where he and Phiz stayed, as a centre whence to explore Bowes, that bleak and stony-faced little town where he found "Dotheboys Hall," and made it and Shaw, the schoolmaster, the centre of his romance. The

“Unicorn” inn at Bowes is pointed out as the place where the novelist met Shaw, afterwards drawing the character of “Squeers” from his peculiarities. The rights and the wrongs of the Yorkshire schools, and the indictment of them that Dickens drew, form still a vexed question. Local opinion is by no means altogether amiably



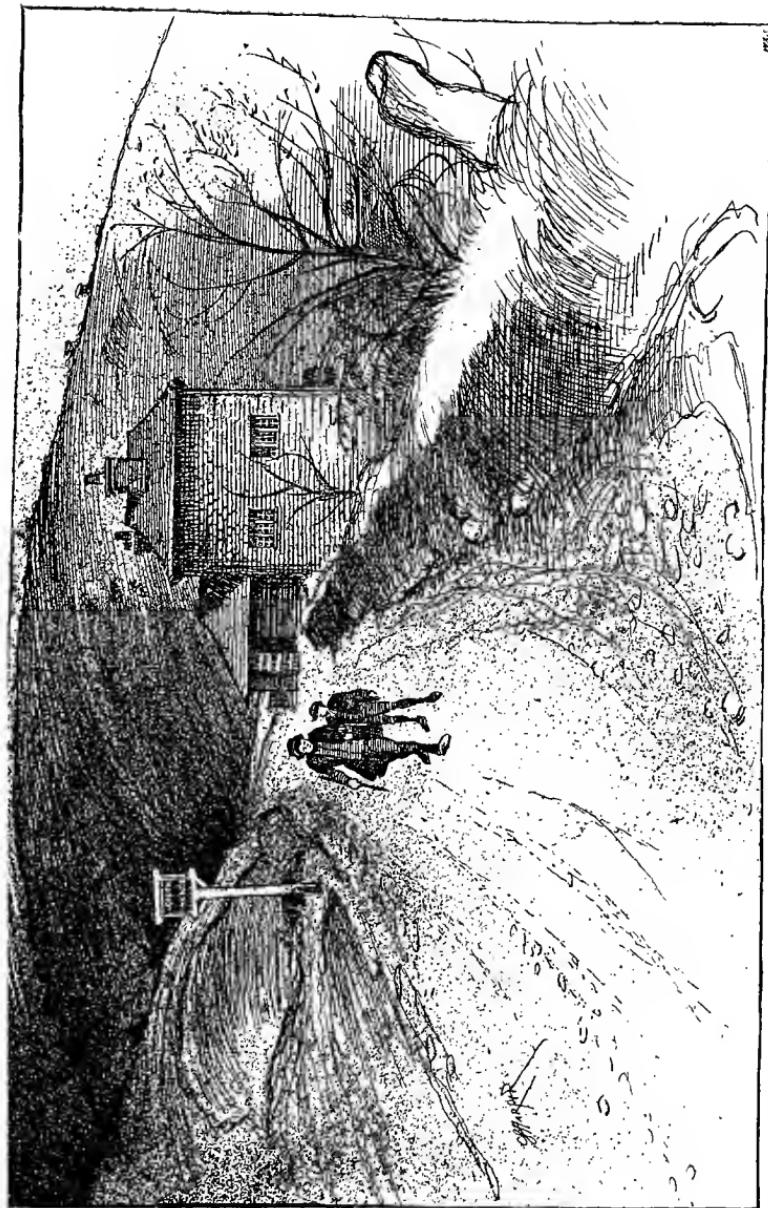
THE “GEORGE,” GRETA BRIDGE.

disposed towards the memory of Dickens in this matter; and although those schools were gravely mismanaged, we must not lose sight of the fact that this expedition undertaken by Dickens was largely a pilgrimage of passion, in which he looked to find scandals, and did so find them. To what extent, for the sake of his “novel with a purpose,” he dotted the i’s and crossed the t’s

of the wrongs he found must ever be a subject for controversy.

The course of *Nicholas Nickleby* brings us, in Chapter XXII., to the long tramp undertaken by Nicholas and Smike from London to Portsmouth, on "a cold, dry, foggy morning in early spring." They made Godalming the first night, and "bargained for two humble beds." The next evening saw them well beyond Petersfield, at a point fifty-eight miles from London, where the humble "Coach and Horses" inn stands by the wayside, and is perhaps the inn referred to by Dickens. The matter is doubtful, because, although the story was written in 1838, when the existing road along the shoulder of the downs at this point had been constructed, with the present "Coach and Horses" beside it, replacing the older inn and the original track that still goes winding obscenrely along in the bottom, it is extremely likely that Dickens described the spot from his childish memories of years before, when, as a little boy, he had been brought up the road with the Dickens family, on their removal from Landport. At that time the way was along the hollow, where the "Bottom" inn, or "Gravel Hill" inn, then stood, in receipt of custom. The house stands yet, and is now a gamekeeper's cottage.

Whichever of the two houses we choose, the identity of the spot is unassailable, because, although in the story it is described as twelve miles from Portsmouth, and is really thirteen, no other inn exists or existed for miles on either



THE "COACH AND HORSES" NEAR DINTON.



side. The bleak and barren scene is admirably drawn: "Onward they kept with steady purpose, and entered at length upon a wide and spacious tract of downs, with every variety of little hill and plain to change their verdant surface. Here, there shot up almost perpendicularly into the sky a height so steep, as to be hardly accessible to any but the sheep and goats that fed upon its sides,



"BOTTOM" INN.

and there stood a huge mound of green, sloping and tapering off so delicately, and merging so gently into the level ground, that you could scarce define its limits. Hills swelling above each other, and undulations shapely and uncouth, smooth and rugged, graceful and grotesque, thrown negligently side by side, bounded the view in each direction; while frequently, with unexpected noise, there uprose from the ground a flight of crows, who, cawing and wheeling round the

nearest hills, as if uncertain of their course, suddenly poised themselves upon the wing and skimmed down the long vista of some opening valley with the speed of very light itself.

“By degrees the prospect receded more and more on either hand, and as they had been shut out from rich and extensive scenery, so they emerged once again upon the open country. The knowledge that they were drawing near their place of destination gave them fresh courage to proceed; but the way had been difficult and they had loitered on the road, and Smike was tired! Thus twilight had already closed in, when they turned off the path to the door of a road-side inn, yet twelve miles short of Portsmouth.

“‘Twelve miles,’ said Nicholas, leaning with both hands on his stick, and looking doubtfully at Smike.

“‘Twelve long miles,’ repeated the landlord.

“‘Is it a good road?’ inquired Nicholas.

“‘Very bad,’ said the landlord. As, of course, being a landlord, he would say.

“‘I want to get on,’ observed Nicholas, hesitating. ‘I scarcely know what to do.’

“‘Don’t let me influence you,’ rejoined the landlord. ‘I wouldn’t go on if it was me.’”

And so here they stayed the night, much to their advantage.

The “handsome hotel,” “between Park Lane and Bond Street,” referred to in Chapter XXXII. of *Nicholas Nickleby*, cannot be identified: there are, and long have been, so many handsome hotels

in that region. It was in the coffee-room of this establishment that Nicholas encountered Sir Mulberry Hawk ; and the description of the affair brings back the memory of a state of things long past. The “Coffee-room” with its boxes partitioned off, no longer exists ; there are no such things as those boxes anywhere now, except perhaps in some old-fashioned “eating-houses.” But in that period of which Dickens wrote, the “coffee-room” of an hotel was an institution not so very long before copied from the then dead or fast-expiring “Coffee Houses” of the eighteenth century : once—in the days before clubs—the meeting-places of wits and business men. The Coffee House had been the club of its own particular age, and as there are nowadays clubs for every class and all professions, so in that period there were special Coffee Houses for individual groups of people, where they read the papers and learned the gossip of their circle.

Inns and hotels copied the institution of a public refreshment-room that would nowadays be styled the restaurant, and transferred the name of “Coffee-room,” without specifically supplying the coffee ; which, to be sure, was a beverage fast growing out of fashion, in favour of wines, beer, and brandy and water. No one drank whisky then.

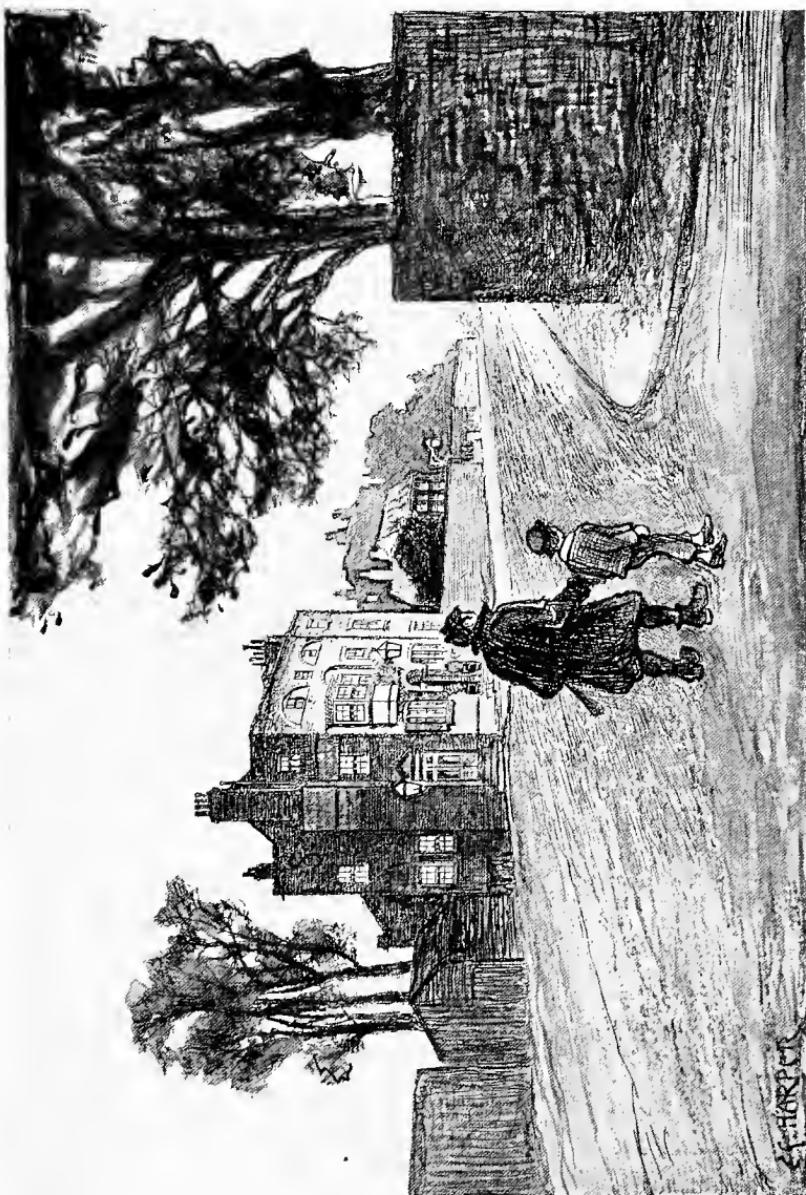
Fashions in nomenclature linger long, and even now in old-established inns and hotels, the Coffee-room still exists, but has paradoxically come to mean a public combined dining- and

sitting-room for private guests, in contradistinction from the Commercial-room, to which commercial travellers resort, at a recognised lower tariff.

There are inns also in *Oliver Twist*; not inns essential to the story, nor in themselves pre-possessing, but, in the case of the “Coach and Horses” at Isleworth, remarkably well observed when we consider that the reference is only in passing. Indeed, the topographical accuracy of Dickens, where he is wishful to be accurate, is astonishing. The literary pilgrim sets out to follow the routes he indicates, possibly doubtful if he will find the places mentioned. There, however, they are (if modern alterations have not removed them), for Dickens apparently visited the scenes and from one eagle glance described them with all the accuracy of a guide-book.

Thus, Bill Sikes and Oliver, trudging from London to Chertsey, where the burglary was to be committed, and occasionally getting a lift on the way, are set down from a cart at the end of Brentford. At length they came to a public-house called the “Coach and Horses”; a little way beyond which another road appeared to turn off. And here the cart stopped.”

One finds the “Coach and Horses,” sure enough, at the point where Brentford ends and Isleworth begins, by the entrance to Sion Park, and near the spot where the road branches off to the left. The “Coach and Horses” is not a picturesque inn. It is a huge, four-square lump of a place, and wears, indeed, rather a dour and



THE "COACH AND HORSES," ISLEWORTH.

CHARPES



forbidding aspect. It is unquestionably the house of which Dickens speaks, and was built certainly not later than the dawn of the nineteenth century. In these latter days the road here has been rendered somewhat more urban by the advent of the electric tramway ; but I have in my sketch of the scene taken the artistic licence of omitting that twentieth-century development, and, to add an air of verisimilitude, have represented Sikes and Oliver in the act of approaching. The left-hand road beyond leads to a right-hand road, as in the story, and this in due course to Hampton.

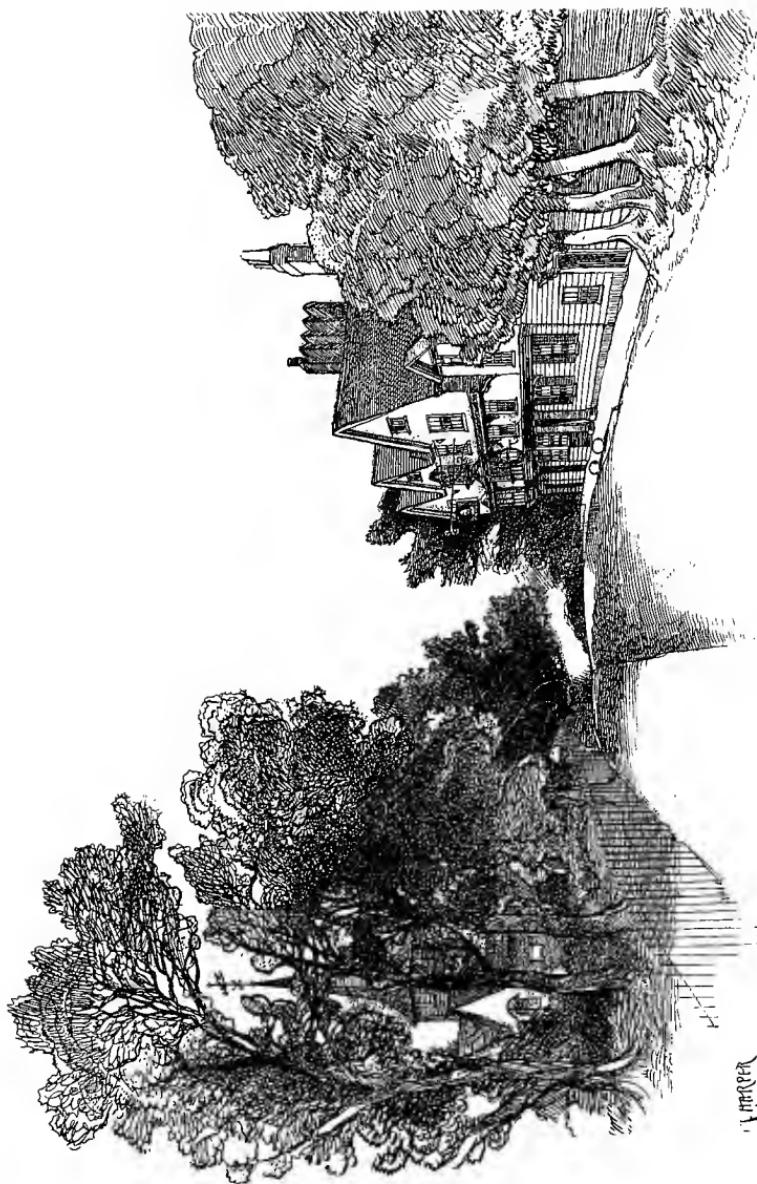
The most interesting Dickensian inn, outside the pages of *Pickwick*, is the “Maypole,” in *Barnaby Rudge*.

There never existed upon this earth an inn so picturesque as that drawn, entirely from his imagination, by Cattermole, to represent the “Maypole.” You may seek even among the old mansions of England, and find nothing more baronial. The actual “Maypole”—when found—is a sad disappointment to those who have cherished the Cattermole ideal, and there is wrath and indignation among pilgrims from over-seas when they come to it. This, although natural enough, is an injustice to this real original, which is one of the most picturesque old inns now to be found, and is not properly to be made little of because it cannot fit an impossible artistic fantasy.

I have hinted above that the “Maypole” requires some effort to find, and that is true enough,

even in these days when the England of Dickens has been so plentifully elucidated and mapped out and sorted over. The prime cause of this incertitude and boggling is that there really is a "Maypole" inn, but at that very different place, Chigwell Row, two miles distant from Chigwell and the "King's Head." Many years ago, the late James Payn wrote an amusing account—as to whose entire truth we cannot vouch—of his taking a party of enthusiastic American ladies in search of this scene of *Barnaby Rudge*. They drove about the forest seeking (such was their ignorance) the "Maypole," and not the "King's Head"; and found it, in a low and ugly beerhouse from which drunken beanfeasters waved inviting pots of beer. Eventually they left the forest convinced that the inn Dickens described was a sheer myth.

If the "King's Head" of fact—"such a delicious old inn opposite the churchyard," as Dickens wrote of it to Forster—is not so wonderful an old house as the "Maypole" of fiction and of Cattermole's picturesque fancy, we must, at any rate, excuse the artist, who was under the necessity of working up to the fervid description of it with which the story begins: "An old building, with more gable-ends than a lazy man would care to count on a sunny day; huge zig-zag chimneys, out of which it seemed as though even smoke could not choose but come in more than naturally fantastic shapes, imparted to it in its tortuous progress; and vast stables, gloomy, ruinous, and empty. The place was said to have



Amadeus



been built in the days of King Henry the Eighth; and there was a legend, not only that Queen Elizabeth had slept there one night while upon a hunting excursion, to wit, in a certain oak-panelled room with a deep bay-window, but that next morning, while standing upon a mounting-block before the door, with one foot in the stirrup, the virgin monarch had then and there boxed and cuffed an unlucky page for some neglect of duty."

Passing the references to sunken and uneven floors and old diamond-paned lattices, with another to an "ancient porch, quaintly and grotesquely carved," which does not exist, we come to a description of dark red bricks, grown yellow with age, decayed timbers, and ivy wrapping the time-worn walls, — all figments of the imagination.

The real "Maypole," identified with the "King's Head" at Chigwell, in Epping Forest, is not the leastest littlest bit like that. The laziest man on the hottest day could easily count its gables, which number three large ones<sup>1</sup> and a small would-be-a-gable-if-it-could, that looks as though it were blighted in its youth and had never grown to maturity. The front of the house is not of red brick, and never was: the present white plaster face being a survival of its early years; while the front of the ground-floor is weather-boarded.

But it is a delightful old house, in a situation equally delightful, standing opposite the thickly

<sup>1</sup> A newer extension, built in recent years, makes a fourth.

wooded old churchyard of Chigwell, just as described in the story ; the sign—a portrait head of Charles the First—projecting from an iron bracket, and the upper storeys of the inn themselves set forward, on old carved oak beams and brackets. There is no sign of decay or neglect about the “ King’s Head.”

In *Martin Chuzzlewit* the literary annotator and professor of topographical exegesis finds an interesting problem of the first dimensions in the question, “Where was the ‘Blue Dragon’ of that story situated ?” It is a matter which, it is to be feared, will never be threshed out to the satisfaction of all seekers after truth. “ You all are right and all are wrong,” as the chameleon is supposed to have said when he heard disputants quarrelling as to whether he was green or pink ; and then turned blue, to confound them. But the chameleon, in this instance, is no more : and we who have opinions may continue, without fear, to hold them.

Well, then : in the third chapter of *Martin Chuzzlewit* we are particularly introduced to an inn, the subject of an earlier allusion in those pages, the “Blue Dragon,” near Salisbury. In what direction it lay from that cathedral city we are not told—whether north, south, east, or west ; and we only infer from incidents of the story, in which the inn is brought into relation with the London mail and coaching in general, that the “Blue Dragon” was at Amesbury, eight miles to the north of Salisbury, by which route the

famous “Quicksilver” Exeter mail to and from London went, in the old coaching days, avoiding Salisbury altogether. The course of the narrative, the situation of an old mansion on the Wilsford road near Amesbury—generally pointed out as Pecksniff’s home—and the position of Amesbury, all seem at the first blush to point to that fine old inn, the “George” at Amesbury, being the



THE “GREEN DRAGON,” ALDERBURY.

original of the “Blue Dragon”; and this old inn certainly was not only a coaching-house, but was what another claimant to the honour of being the real true original of the “Blue Dragon”—the “Green Dragon” at Alderbury—could never have been: a hostelry with accommodation sufficient for postchaise travellers such as old Martin Chuzzlewit and Mary.

The “George” at Amesbury is a house of considerable size and architectural character, and

its beauties might fitly have employed the pencils of Pecksniff's pupils, had that great and good man condescended to notice anything less stupendous than cathedrals, castles, and Houses of Parliament. As it was, however, the architectural studies of his young friends were made to contemplate nothing meaner than "elevations of Salisbury Cathedral from every possible point of sight," and lesser things were passed contemptuously by. (Chap. I.)

The "George," after the fine old church—that church in which Tom Pinch played the organ—is the chief ornament of Amesbury, and that it was the inn meant by Dickens when he wrote *Martin Chuzzlewit* is in the village an article of faith which no visitor dare controvert or dispute in any way on the spot. Like the small boys who do not say "Yah!" and are not courageous enough to make grimaces until safely out of arm's reach, we only dare dispassionately discuss the *pros* and *cons* when out of the place. It were not possible on the spot to object, "Yes, but," and then proceed to argue the point with the landlord, who confidently shows you old Martin Chuzzlewit's bedroom and a room with a descent of one step inside, instead of the "two steps on the inside so exquisitely unexpected that strangers, despite the most elaborate cautioning, usually dived in, head first, as into a plunging-bath."

But the truth is, like many another literary landmark, the "Blue Dragon" in *Martin Chuzzlewit* is a composite picture, combining the features

of both the “George” at Amesbury, eight miles to the north of Salisbury, and those of the “Green Dragon” at Alderbury, three miles to the south. Nay, there were not so long ago at Alderbury those who remembered the picture-sign of the “Green Dragon” there, which doubtless Dickens



THE “GEORGE,” AMESBURY.

saw in his wanderings around the neighbourhood. “A faded and an ancient dragon he was; and many a wintry storm of rain, snow, sleet, and hail had changed his colour from a gaudy blue to a faint lack-lustre shade of grey. But there he hung; rearing in a state of monstrous imbecility on his hind-legs; waxing with every month that

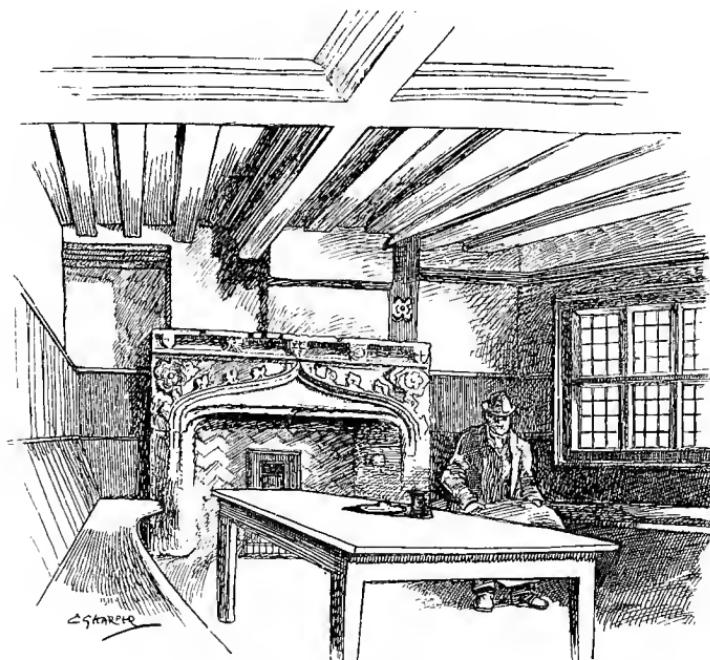
passed so much more dim and shapeless that as you gazed at him on one side of the sign-board it seemed as if he must be gradually melting through it and coming out upon the other." (Chap. III.)

The sign has long since been replaced by the commonplace lettering of the present day, but it was then, in Dickens's own words, "a certain Dragon who swung and creaked complainingly before the village ale-house door," a phrase which at once shows us that if by the "Blue Dragon" of the story the "George" at Amesbury was intended to be described, that was a derogatory description of the fine old hostelry.

This brings us to the chief point upon which the validity of this claim of the "Green Dragon" at Alderbury must rest. Dickens distinctly alludes to the "Blue Dragon" as a "village ale-house," and such it is and has ever been; while to the "George" at Amesbury that description cannot even now justly apply, and certainly it could never in coaching times, when in the heyday of its prosperity, have been so fobbed off with such a phrase. Moreover, we will do well to bear in mind that old Chuzzlewit and his companion did not put up at the inn—this "village ale-house"—from choice. The gentleman was "taken ill upon the road," and had to seek the first house that offered.

Those curious in the byways of Dickens topography will find Alderbury three miles from Salisbury, on the left-hand side of the Southampton road. Half a mile from it, on the other side of

the way, stands "St. Mary's Grange," a red-brick building in a mixed Georgian and Gothic style, built by Pugin, and locally reputed to be the original of Mr. Pecksniff's residence: a circumstance which may well give us pause and opportunity for considering whether Dickens had that



INTERIOR OF THE "GREEN DRAGON," ALDERBURY.

distinguished architect in his mind when creating the character of his holy humbug.

The "Green Dragon," which we have thus shown to have, at the least of it, as good a title as the "George" at Amesbury to be considered the original of the house kept by the genial Mrs. Lupin, friend of Tom Pinch, Mark Tapley, and

Martin Chuzzlewit in particular, and of her fellow-creatures in general, does not directly face the highway, but is set back from it at an angle, behind a little patch of grass. It is pre-eminently rustic, and is even more ancient than the casual wayfarer, judging merely from its exterior, would suppose ; for a fine fifteenth-century carved stone fireplace in what is now the bar parlour bears witness to an existence almost mediæval. It is a beautiful, though dilapidated, work of Gothic art of the Early Tudor period, ornamented with boldly carved crockets, heraldic roses, and shields of arms, and is worthy of inspection for itself alone, quite irrespective of its literary interest.

A London inn intimately associated with *Martin Chuzzlewit* finally disappeared in the early part of 1904, when the last vestiges of the “Black Bull,” Holborn, were demolished. The “Black Bull,” in common with the numerous other old inns of Holborn, in these last few years all swept away, stood just outside the City of London, and was originally, like its neighbours, established for the accommodation of those travellers who, in the Middle Ages, arrived too late in the evening to enter the City. At sundown the gates of the walled City of London were closed, and, unless the traveller was a very privileged person indeed, he found no entrance until the next morning, and was obliged to put up at one of the many hostelries that sprang up outside and found their account in the multitude of such laggards by the way. The old “Black Bull,” after many alterations, was

rebuilt in a very commonplace style in 1825, and in later years it became a merely sordid public-house, with an unlovely pile of peculiarly grim "model" dwellings in the courtyard. In spite of those later changes, the great plaster effigy of the Black Bull himself, with a golden girdle about his middle, remained on his bracket over the first floor window until the house was pulled down, May 18th, 1904.

An amusing story belongs to that sign, for it was, in 1826, the subject of a struggle between the landlord, one Gardiner, on the one side and the City authorities on the other. The Commissioner of Sewers served a notice upon Gardiner, requiring him to take his bull down, but the landlord was obstinate, and refused to do anything of the kind, whereupon the Commissioner assembled a storming-party of over fifty men, with ladders and tackle for removing the objectionably large and weighty effigy. No sooner, however, had the enemy begun their preparations, when, to their astonishment, and to that of the assembled crowds, the bull soared majestically and steadily to what Mrs. Gamp would doubtless have called the "parapidge." Arrived there he displayed a flag with the bold legend, "I don't intrude now."

Some arrangement was evidently arrived at,



SIGN OF THE "BLACK BULL,"  
HOLBORN.

for the bull occupied its original place, above the first-floor window over the archway, for the whole of the seventy-eight years between 1826 and 1904.

The house is referred to in *Martin Chuzzlewit* as the “Bull,” and is the place to which Sairey Gamp repaired from Kingsgate Street to relieve Betsy Prig in the nursing of the mysterious patient. She found it “a little dull, but not so bad as might be,” and was “glad to see a partridge, in case of fire, and lots of roofs and chimley-pots to walk upon.”

There are no greatly outstanding inns to be found in *Bleak House*, the “Dedlock Arms,” really the “Sondes Arms” at Rockingham, being merely mentioned. On the other hand, in *David Copperfield* we find the “Plough” at Blundeston mentioned, and that hotel at Yarmouth whence the London coach started: only unfortunately it is not possible to identify it, either with the “Crown and Anchor,” the “Angel,” or the “Star.”

In Parliament Street, Westminster, until 1899, stood the “Red Lion” public-house, identified with the place where David Copperfield (Chapter IX.) called for the glass of the “genuine stunning.” The incident was one of Dickens’s own youthful experiences, and is therefore to be taken, together with much else in that story, as autobiography.

“I was such a child, and so little, that frequently when I went into the bar of a strange

public-house for a glass of ale or porter, to moisten what I had had for dinner, they were afraid to give it me. I remember, one hot evening, I went into the bar of a public-house, and said to the landlord :

“‘What is your best—your *very best* ale a glass?’ For it was a special occasion, I don’t know what. It may have been my birthday.

“‘Twopence-halfpenny,’ says the landlord, ‘is the price of the Genuine Stunning ale.’

“‘Then,’ says I, producing the money, ‘just draw me a glass of the Genuine Stunning, if you please, with a good head to it.’

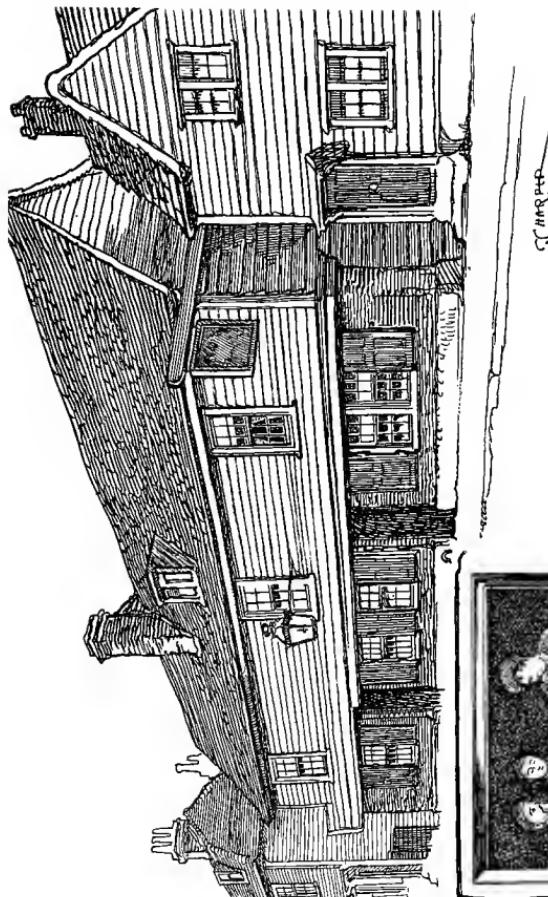
“The landlord looked at me in return over the bar, from head to foot, with a strange smile on his face ; and instead of drawing the beer, looked round the screen, and said something to his wife. She came out from behind it, with her work in her hand, and joined him in surveying me. . . . They served me with the ale, though I suspect it was not the Genuine Stunning ; and the landlord’s wife, opening the little half-door of the bar, and bending down, gave me my money back, and gave me a kiss that was half-admiring and half compassionate, but all womanly and good, I am sure.”

The “Blue Boar” in Whitechapel is referred to, and the “County Inn” at Canterbury, identified with the “Fountain,” where Mr. Dick slept. The “little inn” in that same city, where Mr. Micawber stayed, and might have said—but didn’t—that he “resided, in short, ‘put up,’ ”

there, is claimed to be the “Sun,” but how, of all the little inns of Canterbury—and there are many—the “Sun” should so decisively claim the honour is beyond the wit of man to tell. It is an old, old inn that, rather mistakenly, calls itself an “hotel,” and the peaked, red-tiled roof, the projecting upper storey, bracketed out upon ancient timbers, are evidence enough that it was in being many centuries before the foreign word “hotel” became acclimatised in this country. One may dine, or lunch, or tea at the “Sun,” in the ghostly company of Mr. and Mrs. Micawber, but although warm culinary scents may be noticed with satisfaction by the hungry pilgrim, he misses the “flabby perspiration on the walls,” mentioned in the book. True, it is a feature readily spared.

In the *Uncommercial Traveller* a reference to the “Crispin and Crispianus,” at Strood, is found. It is a humble, weather-boarded inn, whose age might be very great or comparatively recent. But, whatever the age of the present house, there has long been an inn of the name on this spot, the sign being referred back to St. Crispin’s Day, October 25th, 1415, when Agincourt was fought and won. The sign is, however, doubtless far older than that, and probably was one of the very many religious inn-signs designed to attract the custom of thirsty wayfarers to Becket’s shrine.

The brothers Crispin and Crispian were members of a noble family in ancient Rome, who, professing Christianity, fled to Gaul and supported



THE "CRISPIN AND CRISPINUS" STROOD.



themselves by shoemaking in the town of Troyes. They suffered martyrdom at Soissons, in A.D. 287. The sanctity and benevolence of St. Crispin are said to have been so great that he would steal leather as material for shoes for the poor ; for which, did he live in our times, he would still be martyred—in a police-court, to the tune of several months' imprisonment.

The picture-sign of the “Crispin and Crispianus” is said to be a copy of a painting in the church of St. Pantaléon at Troyes, and certainly (but chiefly because of much varnish, and the dust and grime of the road) looks very Old-Masterish. The two saints, seated uncomfortably close to one another, and looking very sheepish, appear to be cutting out a piece of leather to the order of an interesting and gigantic pirate.

A mysterious incident occurred in 1830 at this house, in the death of a man who had acted as ostler at the coaching inns of Rochester and Chatham, and had afterwards tramped the country as a hawker. He lay here dying, in an upper room, and told the doctor who was called to him the almost incredible story that he was really Charles Parrott Hanger, Earl of Coleraine, and not “Charley Roberts,” the name he had usually been known by for twenty years. Although his life had been so squalid and apparently poverty-stricken, he left £1,000 to his son, Charles Henry Hanger.

The “Crispin and Crispianus,” in common with most other erstwhile humble inns, has experi-

enced a social levelling-up since the time when Dickens mentioned it as a house where tramping tinkers and itinerant clock-makers, coming into Strood "yonder, by the blasted ash," might lie. In these times, when the blasted dust of the Dover road is the most noticeable feature, and a half-century has effected all manner of wonderful changes, tramps and their kin find no harbourage at the old house, whose invitation to cyclists and amateur photographers sufficiently emphasises its improved status.

In *Great Expectations* is found a notice of the "Cross Keys," Wood Street, Cheapside, a coaching inn abolished in the '70's; but it is merely an incidental reference, on the occasion of Pip's coming to London by coach from Rochester. The inns of that story are, indeed, not well seen, and although that little boarded inn at Cooling, the "Horseshoe and Castle," is identified as the "Three Jolly Bargemen" of the tale, you can find in those pages no illuminating descriptive phrase on which to put your finger and say, conscientiously, "Found!"

Only at the close of the story, where, in Chapter LIV., Pip is endeavouring to smuggle the convict, Magwitch, out of the country, down the Thames, do we find an inn easily identified. That is the melancholy waterside house below Gravesend, standing solitary on a raised bank of stones, where Pip lands: "It was a dirty place enough, and I daresay not unknown to smuggling adventurers; but there was a good fire in the

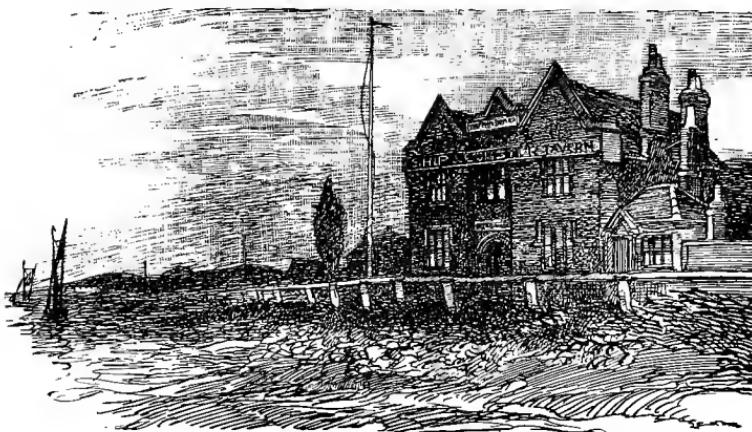
kitchen, and there were eggs and bacon to eat, and various liquors to drink. Also there were two double-bedded rooms—‘such as they were,’ the landlord said.” Outside there was mud: mud and slimy stones, and rotten, slimy stakes sticking out of the water, and a grey outlook across the broad river.

This describes the actual “Ship and Lobster” tavern, on the shore at Denton, below Gravesend, to which you come past the tramway terminus, down a slummy street chiefly remarkable for grit and broken bottles, then across the railway and the canal and on to the riverside where, in midst of the prevalent grittiness that is now the most outstanding natural feature, stands the inn, in company with the office of an alarming person who styles himself “Explosive Lighterman,” at Denton Wharf.

There are even fewer inns to be found in *Our Mutual Friend*, where, although the “Red Lion” at Henley is said to be the original of the up-river inn to whose lawn Lizzie drags the half-drowned Wrayburn, we are not really sure that Henley actually is indicated. That mention of a lawn does not suffice: many riverside inns have lawns. In short, the edge of Dickens’s appreciation of inns was growing blunted, and he took less delight, as he grew older, in describing their peculiarities. His whole method of story-telling was changed. Instead of the sprightly fancy and odd turns of observation that once fell spontaneously from him, he at last came to laboriously construct and polish

the action and conversation of a novel, leaving in comparative neglect those side-lights upon localities that help to give most of his writings a permanent value.

Apart from the novels, we have many inns associated with Dickens by tradition and in his tours and racily descriptive letters; and there, at any rate, we find him, when not overweighted with



THE "SHIP AND LOBSTER."

the more than ever elaborated and melodramatic character of his plots, just as full of quaint, fanciful, and cheerful description as ever.

His tours began early. So far back as the autumn of 1838 Dickens and Phiz took holiday in the midlands, coming at last to Shrewsbury, where they stayed at the "Lion," or rather in what was at that time an annexe of the "Lion," and has long since become a private house. Writing to his elder daughter, Dickens vividly described this

place: "We have the strangest little rooms (sitting-room and two bedrooms together) the ceilings of which I can touch with my hand. The windows bulge out over the street, as if they were little stern windows in a ship. And a door opens out of the sitting-room on to a little open gallery with plants in it, where one leans over a queer old rail."

Mr. Kitton<sup>1</sup> states: "This quaint establishment, alas! has been modernised (if not entirely rebuilt) since those days, and presents nothing of the picturesqueness that attracted the author of *Pickwick*." But that is by no means the case. It stands exactly as it did, except that since the business of the "Lion" has decreased, it no longer forms a part of that great hostelry.<sup>2</sup> The blocked-up communicating doors between the two buildings may still be seen on the staircase of the "Lion," and the little house does still bulge over the pavement and closely resemble the stern of an old man-o'-war.

*The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices*, a light-hearted account of a tour taken by Dickens and Wilkie Collins in 1857, begins with the travellers being set down by the express at Carlisle, and ends, after many wanderings in Cumberland and Lancashire, at Doncaster. It is largely an account of inns, including the "Queen's

<sup>1</sup> *The Dickens Country*. By F. G. Kitton, p. 167.

<sup>2</sup> Within the last few months the lower part of the house has been converted into a dairy, but the part described by Dickens remains unaltered.



THE "LION," SHREWSBURY, SHOWING THE ANNEXE ADJOINING,  
WHERE DICKENS STAYED.



Head," Hesket Newmarket, in Cumberland, now a private house; and the "King's Arms," Market Street, Lancaster, pulled down in 1880. The "King's Arms" was, from the exterior, commonplace personified, but within doors you were surrounded by ancient oaken staircases, mahogany panelling, and, according to Dickens, mystic old servitors in black; and doubtless were so encompassed with mysteries and forebodings that when you retired to rest—not being able in such a house to merely "go to bed"—in one of the catafalque-like four-posters, you immediately leapt between the sheets and drew the clothes over your head, in fear of ghosts; dreaming uncomfortably that you were dead and lying in state, and waking with a terrific start in the morning, at the coming of the hot water and the tap at the door, with the dreadful impression that the Day of Judgment was come and you summoned to account before the Most High. These being the most remarkable features of the "King's Arms" at Lancaster, it is perhaps not altogether strange that the house was at length demolished and replaced by an uninteresting modern hotel, with no associations—and no ghosts.

A weird story was told of the old inn, by which it seems that a young bride was poisoned there, in a room pointed out as the "Bride's Chamber," the criminal being duly hanged at Lancaster gaol. In memory of this traditional romance, it was the custom to serve the incoming guests with a piece of bride-cake. They might

also, if they liked, sleep in the very identical ancient black oak four-poster, in the room where the tragedy took place; but, although there was sufficient eagerness to see it in daylight, no very great competition was ever observed among guests for the honour of occupying—we will not say sleeping in—that tragical couch. Dickens himself, however, lay in it, and seems to have slept sufficiently well; greatly, we may suppose, to his disappointment.

Among those inns that no Dickensian neglects is “Jack Straw’s Castle,” on Hampstead Heath, a house as commonplace and as little like any castle of romance as it is possible to conceive. How else could it be? It was built as a private residence in the beginning of the eighteenth century, and, with various additions and alterations, each one vulgarising the house a step further, it now is little better than a London “public.” The Dickensian association is here a personal one, and somewhat thin at that. It does not form a scene in any one of his stories, but was a house he sometimes affected in his suburban walks. In 1837 we find him writing to that “harbitrary gent,” Forster, inviting him to a winter’s walk across the Heath, and adding, “I know a good ‘ous there where we can have a red-hot chop for dinner and a glass of good wine.” “This,” says Forster, “led to our first experience of ‘Jack Straw’s Castle,’ memorable for many happy meetings in coming years.”

How do myths germinate and sprout? Are

they invented, or do they spring spontaneously into being? Two myths cling to "Jack Straw's Castle": the one that it stands upon the site of a fort thrown up by that peasant leader in the reign of Richard the Second; the other that Dickens not only visited the house, but often stayed there, a chair called "Dickens's Easy Chair" being shown in what is represented as



"JACK STRAW'S CASTLE."

having been his bedroom. The Great Dickens Legend is now well on its way, and the inns "where he stayed" will at no distant day match the apocryphal "Queen Elizabeth's Bedrooms" that amaze the historical student with their number.

The "Jack Straw" legend is old, although by no means so old as the house. It is probable that the house was built on the site of some ancient earthwork, but that might have been either much

older or much later than Jack Straw ; and in any case history has nothing to say about the spot.

The first reference to the inn by its present name appears to be in the report of a horse-race on the Heath in 1748. In the same year an allusion to it in Richardson's *Clarissa Harlowe* speaks merely of "The Castle."

The illustration printed here shows the bow-window of a good many years ago, a somewhat picturesque feature now abolished in favour of an ugly modern front.

## CHAPTER XII

### HIGHWAYMEN'S INNS

THERE is no doubt that, in a certain sense, all inns were anciently hand-in-glove with the highwaymen. No hostelry so respectable that it could safely give warranty for its ostlers without-doors and its servants within. Mine host might be above suspicion, but not all his dependants ; and the gentlemen of the high toby commonly learnt from the staffs of the inns what manner of guests lay there, what their saddle-bags or valises held, and whither they were bound. No wealthy traveller, coming to his inn overnight in those far-distant times, with pistols fully loaded and primed, dared set forth again without narrowly examining his weapons, whose charges, he would be not unlikely to discover, had mysteriously been drawn since his arrival, and perhaps his sword fixed by some unknown agency immovably in its scabbard. You figure such an one, too hurried at his starting to look closely into his equipment, come unexpectedly in the presence of a highwayman, and, his armoury thus raided, falling an easy prey.

These dangers of the wayside inns, and even of the greater and more responsible hostceries in

considerable towns, were so well known that literature, from the time of Queen Elizabeth until that of the earlier Georges, is full of them. Indeed, that singular person, John Clavel, worthless and dissolute sprig of an ancient and respectable landed family in Dorsetshire, especially recounts them in his very serious pamphlet, the *Recantation of an Ill-led Life*, written from his prison-cell in the King's Bench in 1627, and printed in the following year. He inscribes himself "Gentleman" on his title-page, and in his "discouerie of the High-way Law," written in verse, proceeds to "round upon" his late confederates in the spirit of the sneak. All this was in the hope of a pardon, which he apparently obtained, for he was at liberty, and still renouncing his former evil courses, in 1634.

One of the important heads of his pamphlet, addressed to travellers, is "How a Traveller should carry himself at his inn." His advice reads nowadays like that supererogatory kind generally known as "teaching your grandmother to suck eggs"; but when we consider closely that in those times knowledge was not widely diffused, and that to most people a journey was a rare and toilsome experience, to be undertaken only at long intervals and long afterwards talked of, John Clavel's directions to wayfarers may have been really valuable. His pamphlet must, for some reason or another, have been largely purchased, for three editions of it are known.

Thus he warns the traveller come to his inn :

Oft in your clothier's and your grazier's inn,  
 You shall have chamberlains that there have been  
 Plac'd purposely by thieves, or else consenting  
 By their large bribes, and by their often tempting,  
 That mark your purses drawn, and give a guess  
 What's there, within a little, more or less.  
 Then will they grip your cloak-bags, feel their weight :  
 There's likewise in mine host sometimes deceit :  
 If it be left in charge with him all night,  
 Unto his roaring guests he gives a light,  
 Who spend full thrice as much in wine and beer  
 As you in those and all your other cheer.

But the classic and most outstanding literary reference to these dark features of old-time inn-keeping is found in Shakespeare, in the First Part of *King Henry the Fourth*. The scene is Rochester : an inn yard. Enter a carrier, with a lantern in his hand, in the hours before daybreak.

1 *Car.* Heigh ho ! An't be not four by the day, I'll be hanged : Charles' wain is over the new chimney, and yet our horse not packed. What, ostler !

*Ost. [Within.]* Anon, anon.

1 *Car.* I pr'ythee, Tom, beat Cut's saddle, put a few flocks in the point ; the poor jade is wrung in the withers out of all cess.

*Enter another Carrier.*

2 *Car.* Pease and beans are as dank here as a dog, and that is the next way to give poor jades the bots : this house is turned upside down, since Robin ostler died.

1 *Car.* Poor fellow ! never joyed since the price of oats rose ; it was the death of him.

2 *Car.* I think this be the most villainous house in all London road for fleas : I am stung like a tench.

1 *Car.* Like a tench? by the mass, there is ne'er a king in Christendom could be better bit than I have been since the first cock.

2 *Car.* Why, they will allow us ne'er a jordan, and then we leak in your chimney; and your chamber lie breeds fleas like a loach.

1 *Car.* What, ostler! come away, and be hanged, come away.

2 *Car.* I have a gammon of bacon, and two razes of ginger, to be delivered as far as Charing-cross.

1 *Car.* Odsbody! the turkies in my pannier are quite starved.—What, ostler!—A plague on thee! hast thou never an eye in thy head? canst not hear? An 'twere not as good a deed as drink, to break the pate of thee, I am a very villain.—Come, and be hanged:—Hast no faith in thee?

*Enter Gadshill.*

*Gads.* Good morrow, carriers. What's o'clock?

1 *Car.* I think it be two o'clock.

*Gads.* I pr'ythee, lend me thy lantern, to see my gelding in the stable.

1 *Car.* Nay, soft, I pray ye; I know a trick worth two of that, i'faith.

*Gads.* I pr'ythee, lend me thine.

2 *Car.* Ay, when? canst tell?—Lend me thy lantern, quoth a?—marry, I'll see thee hanged first.

*Gads.* Sirrah carrier, what time do you mean to come to London?

2 *Car.* Time enough to go to bed with a candle, I warrant thee.—Come, neighbour Mugs, we'll call up the gentlemen; they will along with company, for they have great charge.

[*Exeunt Carriers.*]

*Gads.* What, ho! chamberlain!

*Cham.* [Within.] At hand, quoth pick-purse.

*Gads.* That's even as fair as—at hand, quoth the chamberlain: for thou variest no more from picking of purses, than giving direction doth from labouring; thou lay'st the plot how.

*Enter Chamberlain.*

*Cham.* Good morrow, master Gadshill. It holds current that I told you yesternight: There's a franklin in the wild of Kent, hath brought three hundred marks with him in gold: I heard

him tell it to one of his company, last night at supper ; a kind of auditor ; one that hath abundance of charge too, God knows what. They are up already, and call for eggs and butter : They will away presently.

*Gads.* Sirrah, if they meet not with saint Nicholas' clerks, I'll give thee this neck.

*Cham.* No, I'll none of it : I pr'ythee, keep that for the hangman ; for, I know, thou worship'st saint Nicholas as truly as a man of falsehood may.

*Gads.* What talkest thou to me of the hangman ? if I hang, I'll make a fat pair of gallows : for, if I hang, old sir John hangs with me ; and, thou knowest, he's no starveling. Tut ! there are other Trojans that thou dreamest not of, the which, for sport sake, are content to do the profession some grace ; that would, if matters should be looked into, for their own credit sake, make all whole. I am joined with no foot land-rakers, no long-staff, six-penny strikers ; none of these mad, mustachio purple-hued malt-worms : but with nobility, and tranquillity ; burgomasters, and great oneyers ; such as can hold in ; such as will strike sooner than speak, and speak sooner than drink, and drink sooner than pray : And yet I lie ; for they pray continually to their saint, the commonwealth ; or, rather, not pray to her, but prey on her ; for they ride up and down on her, and make her their boots.

*Cham.* What, the commonwealth their boots ? will she hold out water in foul way ?

*Gads.* She will, she will ; justice hath liquored her. We steal as in a castle, cock-sure ; we have the receipt of fern-seed, we walk invisible.

*Cham.* Nay, by my faith ; I think you are more beholden to the night, than to fern-seed, for your walking invisible.

*Gads.* Give me thy hand : thou shalt have a share in our purchase, as I am a true man.

*Cham.* Nay, rather let me have it, as you are a false thief.

*Gads.* Go to ; *Homo* is a common name to all men. Bid the ostler bring my gelding out of the stable. Farewell, you muddy knave. [Exeunt.

There was never any lack of evidence as to the complicity of innkeepers in the doings of highwaymen. When John Nevison and his

associates were tried at York in 1684, for highway robbery, their headquarters were stated, on oath, to have been at the "Talbot," Newark, where the landlord was "supposed" to be cognisant of their business, and the ostler was known to have been in their pay. Nevison, it should be said, was the man who really did ride horseback to York in one day. He achieved the feat, and



THE "THREE HOUSES INN," SANDAL.

established the celebrated *alibi* by it, in 1676, before Turpin (who never did anything of the kind) was born. But at last, in 1684, the end came. He was arrested at the still existing "Three Houses" inn, at Sandal, near Wakefield, and being found guilty, was executed on Knaves-mire, York, on May 4th, in that year.

A rather startling sidelight on these old-time aspects of inns was the discovery, in 1903, of an ancient and long unsuspected staircase at the

“Bush,” Farnham. In the course of extensive repairs the builders came upon a staircase that had once led up among the rafters of the oldest part of the house; and it was presumed by those learned in the history of that picturesque Surrey town that, by connivance of the landlord at some



THE “CROWN” INN, HEMPSTEAD.

distant period, it was used by highwaymen as a hiding-place when hard pressed. Near by the stairway a number of old coins were found, but most of them were so worn and obliterated, that it was an impossibility to read the date or any other part of the inscription.

The most famous highwayman of all time—famous in a quite arbitrary and irrational way, for he was at the bottom, rather than at the

head of his profession—is Dick Turpin, who was born at Hempstead, in Essex, in 1705, at the “Crown” inn, his father being landlord of that hostelry, which still faces the road, and looks on to the lane that winds up to the village church. There is much that is appropriate, if you do but consider it, in one who is to be a highwayman and finally to be hanged, being born in a place called Hempstead; but this by the way. The ring of old trees planted on an ancient circular earthwork beside the lane opposite his birthplace (and seen in the illustration) is known locally as Turpin’s Ring.

The youthful Turpin began his career as apprentice to a Whitechapel butcher, and while still serving his indentures started his course of low villainy by stealing some cattle from a Plaistow farmer. Fleeing from justice, he joined a band of smugglers and sheep-stealers who had their head-quarters in Epping Forest, and their store-house in a cave in the neighbourhood of Chingford; a spot now occupied by a singularly commonplace modern beer-house, like a brick box, named from this romantic circumstance, “Turpin’s Cave.”

A reward of fifty guineas was offered for the arrest of this precious gang, but it was not until the amount was doubled that things grew dangerous, and the unholy brotherhood was broken up. Turpin then took to scouring the roads singly, until he met with Tom King, with whom he entered into a partnership that lasted

until he accidentally shot King dead when aiming at a police-officer who was endeavouring to arrest both, at the "Red Lion," Whitechapel, in 1737.

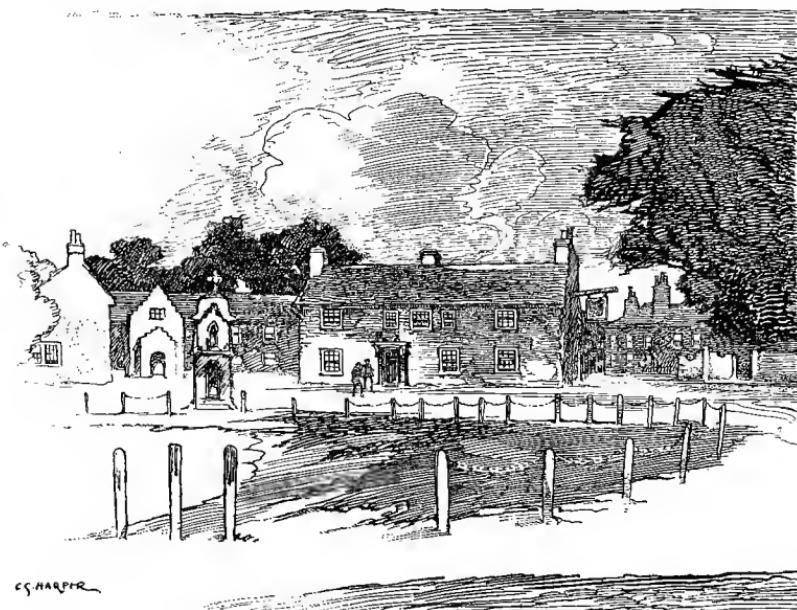
His partner dead, Turpin, finding London too hot to hold him, removed quietly to Welton, a Yorkshire village ten miles from Beverley, where he set up as a gentleman horse-dealer, Palmer



"TURPIN'S CAVE," NEAR CHINGFORD.

by name. He had not long been domiciled in those parts before the farmers and others began to lose their horses in a most unaccountable way, and so they might have continued to lose and not discover the hand that spoiled them, but for the coarse and brutal nature that was Turpin's undoing. Returning from a shooting excursion in which he had apparently not succeeded in shooting anything, the self-styled "Palmer" wantonly

shot one of his neighbours' fowls. The neighbour remonstrated with him and probably suggested that it required a good shot to bring down game but that the domestic rooster was an easy mark for a poor sportsman, whereupon the "gentlemanly horse-dealer" threatened to serve him in the same way.



THE "GREEN DRAGON," WELTON.

One did not, even in 1739, threaten people with impunity and shot-guns. Something unpleasant generally resulted; and "Palmer" was accordingly arrested at the "Green Dragon" inn, Welton, on a charge of brawling; being afterwards haled before the magistrates assembled at Petty Sessions at Beverley, where, as he could

produce no friends to speak on his behalf, he was put back for further inquiries. Those inquiries resulted in his being charged with stealing a black mare, blind of an eye, off Heckington Common. In fiction—and especially in fiction as practised by Harrison Ainsworth—Turpin at this point would in some way have sprung upon



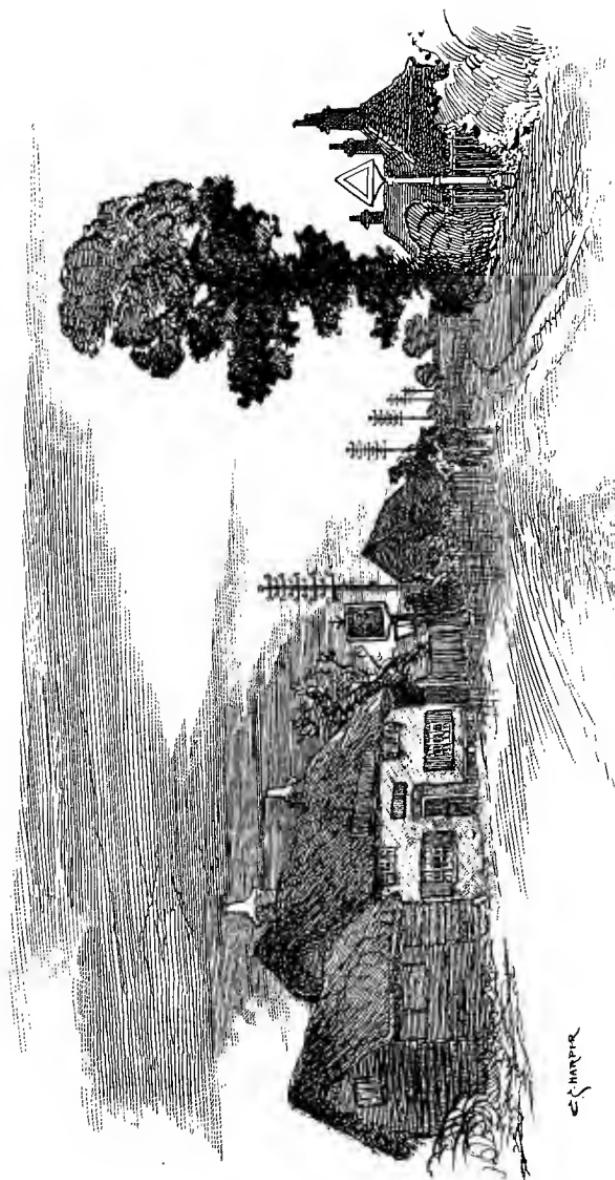
THE "THREE MAGPIES," SIPSON GREEN.

the back of Black Bess, come ready to hand from nowhere in particular, and would have been carried off triumphantly from the midst of his "enemies"; but these things do not happen in real life, and he was, instead, lodged in York Castle. Thence he wrote from his dungeon cell a letter to his brother at Hempstead, imploring him in some way to 'cook him up a character.

This letter was not prepaid, and the brother, not recognising the handwriting, refused to pay the sixpence for it demanded by the Post Office.

See now from what trivial incidents great issues hang. The village postmaster chanced to be identical with the schoolmaster who had taught Turpin to write. He was a man of public spirit, and travelled to York and identified the prisoner there as the man who had been "wanted" for many crimes. It was on April 17th, 1739, in the thirty-fourth year of his age, that Dick Turpin was hanged on Knavesmire, York, and since then he has become very much of a hero: perhaps the sorriest, the most sordid and absolutely commonplace scoundrel that was ever raised on so undeserved a pedestal.

No district was more affected by highwaymen in the old days than Hounslow Heath, and the fork of the roads, where the two great highways to Bath and Exeter set out upon their several courses at the west end of what was once Hounslow village and is now Hounslow town, used in those brave old days to be decorated with a permanent gibbet, rarely without its scarecrow occupant, in the shape of some tattered robber, strung up as a warning to his fellows. Prominent amongst many stories that belong to this stretch of country is that of the murder of Mr. Mellish, brother of the then Member of Parliament for Grimsby, on a night in 1798, when returning from a day's hunting with the King's Buckhounds in Windsor Forest. The carriage in which his



THE "OLD MAGPIES."



party were seated was passing the lonely old beerhouse called the "Old Magpies," at Sipson Green, at half-past eight, when it was attacked by three footpads. One held the horses' heads, while the other two guarded the windows, firing a shot through them, to terrify the occupants. No resistance was offered to the demand for money, and purses and bank-notes were handed over, as a matter of course. Then the carriage was allowed to proceed, a parting shot being fired after it. That shot struck the unfortunate Mr. Mellish in the forehead, and he died shortly after being removed to an upper room in an adjoining inn, still standing, the "Three Magpies." The older and more humble inn, heavily thatched and with a beetle-browed and sinister look, where the footpads had been drinking before the attack, makes a picture, in the melodramatic sort, on the Bath Road, even to-day.

A very curious and authentic relic of those old times is found in that secluded little inn, the "Green Man," a most innocent-looking, white, plaster-faced house that seems a very bower of rustic simplicity and guilelessness, standing at Hatton—"Hatton-in-the-Hinterland" as one feels tempted to style it—a rural hamlet, "the world forgetting, by the world forgot," tucked away in the beautiful orchard country between the angle formed by those branching Bath and Exeter roads westward of Hounslow town. It is to-day, as I have said, a beautiful district of orchards, where the pink and white of the apple-blossom delights

the eye in spring, and the daffodil grows. There is an old rustic pound at Hatton, and in front of the “Green Man” an idyllic pond where ducks quack and dive; and everything seems as pure and unspotted from the world as those white Aylesbury ducks themselves would appear to be. But Hatton is a Place with a Past, and the “Green Man” not so green as you might suppose. For here spread the lonely and sinister Heath, in days gone by, and at the “Green Man” the highwaymen of the district, who all cherished the most magnificent thirsts, and would not readily barter them away, foregathered in the intervals between offering wayfarers an unwelcome choice between rendering money or life. Sometimes the Bow Street runners—so called, in the contrariwise spirit, because they never by any chance ran, unless it might be away—would, daring very much indeed, poke inquisitive noses into the “Green Man,” but they never found any one more suspicious there than a drunken carter. For why? Because in the little parlour on the left-hand side as you enter, there is a veritable highwayman’s hiding-hole at the back of the old-fashioned grate, filling what was once an old-world chimney-corner. Into this snug, not to say over-warm and possibly sooty place, one of the starlight conveyers of property upon the Heath could creep on emergency and wait until danger passed off.

That Putney Heath was a favourite resort of the gentry of the horse-pistol and crape mask is a mere commonplace to the student of these byways



THE "GREEN MAN," HATTON.



THE HIGHWAYMAN'S HIDING-HOLE.



of history, and, however little it may be suspected by those who look in casually at the "Green Man" that stands on the crest of Putney Hill, where the Heath and the Portsmouth Road begin, that house was in the old days rightly suspect. About it—and no doubt also in it—lurked that bright and shining light of the craft, Jerry Avershawe, that bold spirit who, after making his name a name of dread, and Putney Heath and Wimbledon Common places to be avoided by all travellers with money and valuables to lose, died on the scaffold at Kennington in 1795, in his twenty-second year.

Footpads, too, frequented the "Green Man": despicable fellows, who were to highwaymen what "German silver" and "American cloth" are to the real articles. The footpads waited for revellers who had taken too much liquor and were zig-zagging their unsteady way home, before they dared attack. A curious little incident in this sort was enacted in 1773 at the "Green Man." Two convivial fellows drinking there had been watched by two footpads named William Brown and Joseph Witlock. When the two jolly topers came forth and corkscrewed a devious course home-along, Messrs. Brown and Witlock set upon them and secured the highly desirable booty of twenty guineas and some snuff-boxes and pen-knives. It was ill gleaning for any other of the fraternity, after thoroughgoing practitioners like these had gone over the pockets of the lieges. The smallest involuntary contributions were grate-

fully received, and they condescended even to relieve a baker's boy of his little all, which was little indeed: consisting of a silver buckle and some halfpence. It is rather satisfactory, after all this, to learn that Messrs. Brown and Witlock were hanged.

The "Green Man" still keeps a stout, bolt-studded door, and the house, seen across the road from where the large old-fashioned pound for strayed horses, donkeys, and cattle stands on the Heath, presents a charming scene.

The "Spaniards" inn, that picturesque and picturesquely situated old house, built about 1630, in what was then an extremely lonely situation on the roadside between Hampstead and Highgate, stands actually in the parish of Finchley. It occupies the site of a lodge-entrance into what was once the Bishop of London's great rural park of Finchley, where there stood until quite modern times a toll-gate that took tribute of all wayfarers. The odd little toll-house itself is still a feature of the scene, and may be noted on the left hand of the illustration.

How the "Spaniards" derived its name is rather a matter of conjecture than of ascertained, sheer, cold-drawn fact. If the generally received version be correct, the name should be spelled with an apostrophe "s," to denote a single individual; for, according to that story, the original lodge was taken over by a Spaniard about 1620, and converted into a place of entertainment for Londoners, who even then had begun to frequent

Hampstead and the Heath. The fact that the Spanish Ambassador, Gondomar, retiring from the danger of plague in the infected air of London, resided at neighbouring Highgate, 1620-22, may possibly have some bearing upon the question.

It becomes a little difficult to believe in the



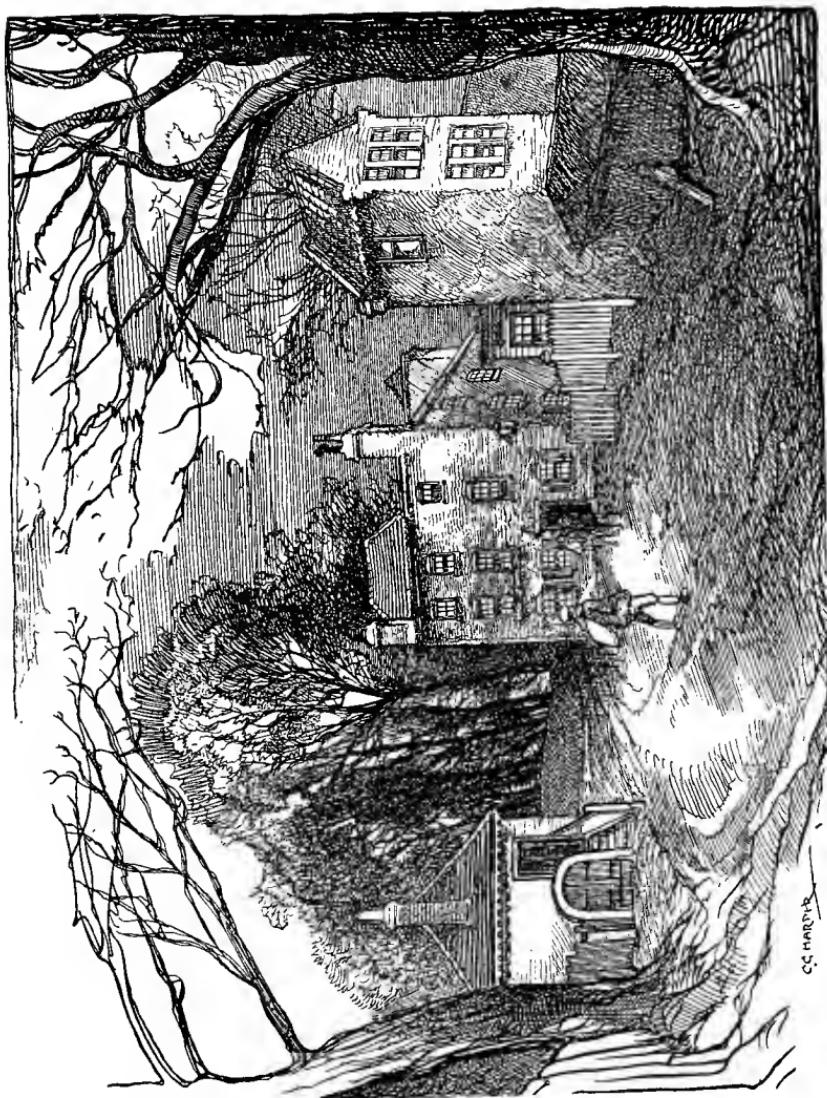
THE "GREEN MAN," PUTNEY.

"Spaniards" being so early a place of popular resort; but, shaming the incredulous, there stands the old house, visibly old, undoubtedly large and designed for the conduct of a considerable business, and still comparatively lonely. It is also one of those very few houses, out of an incredibly large number, which really can make out a good claim to have been frequented by Dick Turpin.

This spot was well within the “Turpin Country,” so to speak, as one speaks of literary landmarks ; it was included in his “sphere of influence,” as they say in international politics ; or simply (as a policeman might put it) was “on his beat.” Turpin has so taken hold of the imagination that you find legends of him in the most impossible places, but his real centre of activity, before he fled into Yorkshire, was Epping Forest, and a radius of twenty miles from Chingford just about covers his province.

It is only in modern times that the “Spaniards” has been anxious to claim Turpin. In that hero’s period, and when highwaymen still haunted dark roads and were hand-in-glove with many innkeepers, the “Spaniards” was no doubt just as anxious to disclaim any such association. Thus we do not find, in any memoirs of former landlords, “Turpin as I knew Him,” or anything of that kind. It is a pity, for we are in such a case reduced to accept legends, and Heaven and the inquirer into these things alone know what lies these legends tell. At the “Spaniards,” however, we accept the tradition that mine host, throughout a long series of years, had an excellent understanding with the whole fraternity of road-agents, and with Turpin in particular.

It is not necessary to this general belief to place one’s faith in the truth of the stable attached to the house having been that of Black Bess, because we know that famous mare to have been entirely the figment of Harrison Ainsworth’s im-



THE "SPANIARDS," HAMPSTEAD HEATH.

C. H. MARSH



agation ; and the quaint old tower-like garden-house seen on the right hand of the accompanying picture of the inn is itself so picturesquely suggestive of headlong flights and pursuits that, whether Turpin *did* hide in it, or not, it is obviously demanded by all the canons of the picturesque that he *should* be made to do so—and accordingly he is. Thus we read : “ This outhouse was a favourite resting-place for Turpin, and many a time on the late return of the marauder has it served as a bedroom. The underground passages that led to the inn itself have been filled up, years ago. Formerly, here Dick was safe enough. Were the two doors attacked by unpleasant visitors, he dived through the secret trap-door into the underground apartment, there to await the departure of the raging officers, or to betake himself to the inn, if that were clear of attack.”

Oh ! those “ secret passages ” and “ underground apartments ” ! Do we not meet them (in legend) everywhere ? And have they not invariably been “ filled up ” long ago ?

Forty-one years after Turpin had been hanged we find the “ Spaniards ” in touch with actual, unquestionable history. June, 1780, was the time of the “ No Popery Riots ” in London, when Newgate was fired by the mob, and half a million pounds’ worth of damage was done to business houses and private residences. The Earl of Mansfield’s town house, in Bloomsbury Square, was destroyed, and the mob, pleased with their handiwork there, determined to complete their revenge on the

obnoxious judge by treating his country mansion at Caen Wood in the same manner.

Caen Wood still stands hard by the “Spaniards,” which you must pass in order to come to it from London. Here the landlord stood, with the toll-bar behind him, like another Horatius in the gate, and met the rioters as they came with pikes and “No Popery” flags, and torches and firelocks, streaming along the road. They were an unsuspecting mob, and a thirsty, and when mine host invited them to partake of his best, free of charge, and even to wallow in it, if they would, they did not stop to ask the motive of such extraordinary generosity, but took him at his word and sat boozing there until the detachment of Horse Guards, sent up in response to the mounted messenger despatched by the landlord, had time to dispose themselves in the Caen Wood grounds, and so to overawe their undisciplined force.

A very great deal of the “Spaniards’” pictur-esque ness is due to the rustic setting of narrow lane and tall elms that frames it in, but that story of the resourceful landlord and his artful way with those London furies gives the house and the scenery a final dramatic touch. You fancy, if you stroll that way some June evening, that you see him, in old-fashioned dress—buckled shoes, worsted stockings, knee-breeches, scrubby wig—standing in the roadway, tankard in one hand, churchwarden pipe in the other, with assumed joviality confronting a rabble in equal parts drunk and mad. You see the banner, “No

Popery!" you hear the curses and—without the aid of imagination, for the "Spaniards" is a going concern—smell the drink. And presently you hear the gallop of the Horse Guards and the rattle and jingle of their accoutrements.

But you must not by any means come here on Easter Monday or any other occasion of popular holiday, for amidst such wholesale merry-making imagination becomes atrophied, and the ghosts of historic drama will not condescend to share the stage with twentieth-century comedy.









